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ABSTRACT

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Media, Bureaucracy and the Success of Social Protest: Media Coverage of Environmental Movement Groups

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ABSTRACT

Media, Bureaucracy and the Success of Social Protest: Media Coverage of Environmental Movement Groups

This study investigated a point of disagreement in the literature: does organizational bureaucracy help or hinder the success of social protest, measured here as prestige newspaper coverage given to environmental groups. Contrary to previous research, these data found a curvilinear relationship between level of bureaucracy and media success; medium bureaucracy groups were most successful at securing coverage. Increasing bureaucracy was not an automatic consequence of aging protest groups; there was no relationship between bureaucracy level and group age. There was a significant correlation, however, between group age and the use of institutional protest tactics.

Media, Bureaucracy and the Success of Social Protest: Media Coverage of Environmental Movement Groups

Since the rise of commercial mass media, social protest groups have recognized the importance of gaining access to media to take their grievances and aspirations directly to the mass public, helping to raise awareness for their causes and mobilize supporters. It remains true today that media coverage can greatly influence the nature, development, and ultimate success of social protest (Kielbowicz & Scherer, 1986).

Although media coverage may be important to protest groups, not all groups organize themselves in the same way to obtain such coverage. In any large-scale social movement, the individual groups exhibit a broad range of organizational styles, ranging from large, formal, bureaucratic groups to small, loosely configured ones.

The popular notion of a successful social movement group is the latter type, or one that sticks to the grassroots level, utilizing the energy and passion of an army of committed members. What a small, informal group lacks in finances or prestige it may make up for in spontaneity and a cadre of loyal volunteers who are passionate, enthusiastic and able to organize well-attended protest demonstrations or orchestrate turn-out at public hearings.

But many modern social movement groups don't fit this stereotype. For example, many larger groups in the national environmental movement hire in-house attorneys, scientists, and public relations practitioners and use finely tuned direct mail campaigns to attract massive numbers of largely inactive "paper members." Several environmental groups sponsor their own credit cards and sell extensive lines of merchandise.

Whether formally organized grassroots groups are more effective in obtaining media coverage is a point of disagreement among social movement scholars. Some scholars maintain that a highly formalized structure aids a group's ability to participate in and shape media coverage of its issues; a large group with a separate media staff may be perceived as a legitimate news source and therefore more capable of sustaining the media's attention. Other scholars have argued that a large bureaucratic structure indicates a coopted, ineffective group both in its issue work and ability to secure coverage. This research investigates whether the degree of bureaucratization affects a group's ability to participate in and shape media coverage of its issues.

The social movement chosen to test the bureaucracy hypothesis was the environmental movement, a movement with a wide variety of groups in terms of age, size, tactics, and internal organization. Because this movement has spanned nearly a century, it provided a unique opportunity to test both older, well-established groups and relatively new ones. Public interest in the environment has endured for more than a century in this country and has contributed to a long, rich involvement of environmental groups in environmental issues. The high level of media coverage about the environment suggests not only wide reader and viewer appeal, but also the media's legitimation of the environment as a serious social problem warranting regular coverage.

Media, Social Conflict and Social Movements

Social protest is a time-honored cultural tradition in American society, from the Boston Tea Party, the Agrarian Revolt of the late 1800s and the suffragettes in the early 1900s to the modern-day movements of the 1960s and 1970s. But societal institutions do not necessarily welcome or embrace change or the protest that may lead to it. Indeed, some would argue that societies are more adept at stifling change than they are at promoting or accepting it (Goodwyn, 1978; Donohue, Tichenor, & Olien, 1973).

The media role in the reporting of conflict is described by some scholars as one of social control (Donohue, Tichenor, & Olien, 1973; Breed, 1958; Shoemaker, 1984; Van den Berghe, 1967; Corbett, 1992; Janowitz, 1952). Media, as an integrated part of the larger social system, are structurally dependent on the power structure and powerful individuals within it for news. Because they are not independent generators of information, media must depend on the mutual cooperation of other institutions for news, and as such, play an important role in maintaining the larger social system. The mass media role is primarily one of stability and conflict control; media don't fundamentally challenge the dominant power structure for they are a part of it.

This is not to say the media are mere "sounding boards for the rich and powerful."[1] An important part of journalistic professionalism is a belief in the autonomy of reporting, which includes the media's ability to criticize the powerful and apply "corrective pressure" to notable bad apples (Donohue, Tichenor, & Olien, 1973). But numerous studies have questioned the notion of media independence, notably studies documenting a reluctance of media institutions to attack important advertisers, individuals or institutions (Breed, 1958; Shepherd, 1981; Paletz, Reichert, & McIntyre, 1971; Weis & Burke, 1986)[2] and a deference to the power structure by the predominate use of authority sources (Brown, Bybee, Wearden, & Straughan, 1987; Corbett, 1993a, 1993b; Culbertson, 1975; Fishman, 1980; Molotch & Lester, 1975; Sigal, 1973; Hackett, 1985; Cooper & Soley, 1990). In addition, the freedom of individual journalists is constrained in the newsroom by the institutions for which they work in the form of subtle "conditioned beliefs" (Chan & Lee, 1988).

Instead of a powerful "watchdog" press role, media more accurately act as "guard-dogs" (Olien, Donohue, & Tichenor, 1995) protecting those in power and attacking those in vulnerable or weaker but threatening positions. When conflict surfaces, media possess the ability to selectively use or suppress certain kinds of information deemed potentially harmful to maintenance of the status quo, the so-called gatekeeping role. But media also have the discretion to distribute information about conflict, providing feedback and applying corrective pressures to selected social issues or conflicts (such as through editorial comment or continued attention), increasing the likelihood that the larger system will respond (Donohue, Tichenor, & Olien, 1972, 1973).

Social Movements and Media Coverage

One source of conflict surrounding social issues is a challenging social movement. A social movement is a more-or-less persistent and organized effort by a relatively large number of people designed to bring about--or resist--social change. Once a social movement has emerged and begun to take part in articulating and defining a social problem, messages must be brought to members and potential members through a variety of channels. Movement-controlled channels are important but limited in reach. Eventually, movement groups (often referred to as SMOs or social movement organizations) seek to expand their base of support and gain the attention of policy-makers and elites through coverage in the mass media. In modern society, media have become the "central battleground" for addressing social problems which challenging protest groups "ignore at their peril" (Gamson, 1990, p. 147).

Mass media attention is important for SMOs whether they are large or small, informal or formal, but perhaps for different reasons. For informal, new or resource-poor protest groups, coverage is important for mobilizing, gaining legitimation, and acquiring access to a wider audience. According to Wolfsfeld (1991), newsworthy behavior (particularly disorder, if it is covered) can serve as a substitute for status and resources.

But as Zald and McCarthy (1987) noted, attracting media attention is also extremely important for large, established SMOs trying to hold onto members who are distant and unconnected. Van den Hoonaard (1991) concluded that in large groups, solidarity with distant members must be attained not through direct personal contact but through special publications and mass media.

The media's reporting process has consequences for social protest and its presentation to the public. By deciding whether to air news of social protest, what sources to use and how to "frame" the issue, the media can greatly shape a protest message for a public audience. Media coverage may portray social protestors as deviant law-breakers (Shoemaker, 1984) threatening the social fabric, or as legitimate, concerned citizens alerting the public to a serious problem deserving of attention and action. Those who are able to participate in the articulation of a social problem in the mass media are more likely to have a role in how that social problem is defined and ultimately acted upon.

The need for media attention can affect the nature of the group itself (Gitlin, 1980). Molotch stated that "the medium becomes the movement" because media coverage pursued by a group shapes its leadership, its tactics, and ultimately its success (1979, p. 81). Kielbowicz and Scherer (1986) said the need for sustained media attention can drive a movement group to change its internal organization to better suit the media's needs.

The Arguments: Bureaucracy and Social Movements

Although "bureaucracy" is most often associated with government, it also refers to a type of organization or management style found in many types of groups. Blau wrote that despite connotations with inefficiency and red tape, the term bureaucracy was used in sociology "neutrally" to refer to the administrative aspects of organizations, often indicated by the amount of energy devoted to organizational maintenance rather than to achieving objectives (1974, p. 29).

Characteristics of bureaucratic organization include jurisdictional areas ordered by rules, a system of office hierarchy, super- and sub-ordination of positions, a concentration of leadership, and management based on written documents. A bureaucratically organized group also has highly differentiated staff positions that require specialized qualifications or training, such as attorneys or media directors.

There are two competing arguments or models among social movement researchers concerning the effect of bureaucratization upon protest group success. One model (supported by Weber, Michels, Piven and Cloward, Gerlach and Hine, and Breines) holds that highly formalized and bureaucratically organized groups are less successful because they tend to become more conservative and ineffective, suffer from a diffusion of protest, and are alienated from a grassroots base of support. Weber (trans., 1964; Gerth & Mills, 1946) concluded that increasing bureaucratization led inevitably to conservatism, as charismatic leaders with radical aims were replaced by administrative leaders more concerned with organizational maintenance than social change. Michels (1903/1949) held that large-scale social organization and democracy were fundamentally incompatible: "Whoever says organization says oligarchy." With increasing organization, Michels said that a mass movement became more hierarchical and came to reflect the structural characteristics of the surrounding social order it was seeking to change.

Several scholars have found utility in the Weber-Michels model for modern-day movements. Van den Hoonaard concluded that large, formally organized groups seemed to show less "radicalism and decisiveness" and had subdued extreme aspirations, "lest they offend any element within the group" (1991, p. 34). Piven and Cloward (1977) insisted that organized movements basically cannot protect themselves from cooptation and that formal organizations divert the collective energy of mobilized individuals into routine politics. Gerlach and Hine (1967) said that a defining element of a social movement--face-to-face recruitment at the grassroots level--was compromised by a hierarchical, more distant organization. Gerlach and Hine (1967), and Breines (1982), concluded that decentralized, informal movements were more likely to succeed.

The other model (based upon resource mobilization theory and supported by Zald and McCarthy, Gamson, Staggenborg, and Kielbowicz and Scherer) states that a bureaucratic organization style instead indicates the presence of a differentiated, professional staff who contribute to long-term maintenance and stability and who possess the legitimation and ability to attract continuing media attention.

Gamson found that bureaucratically organized groups were moderately more successful because a bureaucratic structure gave them a "higher readiness for action" and helped with the problem of maintenance (1990, p. 91). Gamson, using bureaucracy characteristics similar to

Weber's, found that the larger the group, the easier it was to gain acceptance, although size made no difference in securing new advantages.[3]

Staggenborg (1988, 1989) found in her study of groups in the pro-choice movement that a formalized structure in movement groups served to maintain the movement, especially when issue conditions made mobilization difficult. She concluded that it was the combination of formalized structure and professional leadership that facilitated organizational maintenance.

Kielbowicz and Scherer (1986) said that bureaucratization derives in part from the need for sustained media attention, attention which can greatly contribute to the movement's success in expanding its concerns to the general public and onto the policy makers' agenda. But the scholars said the demands of media reporting routines (among them the need for authoritative sources who are credible and easily located) also has a moderating and conservatizing force on social movement organizations.

Hypotheses: Bureaucracy and Media Coverage

Protest Tactics

Researchers on both sides of the bureaucratization argument agree that the formalization of movement groups often signals a shift away from direct action tactics (Piven & Cloward, 1977; Staggenborg, 1988). For a small, informal group, dramatic direct action can serve as a substitute for status and resources, can aid in mobilization and attention, and has inherent, undeniable newsworthiness.

However, "disruptive" direct actions carry risks for groups engaging in them, for they may alienate a wide base of members or ties to the power structure and may be marginalized in media coverage (Shoemaker, 1984; Cohen, 1972; Cohen & Young, 1973). Both Barkan (1987) and Vogel (1980) noted that direct action was a liability to some organizations in the anti-nuclear movement.

The media, as agents of social stability, may view "institutional" protest actions as less threatening. Professional, diversified bureaucratic groups typically have available a much wider range of institutional tactics, such as providing expert testimony at a hearing, calling a news conference, or issuing a scientific report, tactics which also are more compatible with the working schedules of professional activists and reporters alike.

The evolution of the environmental movement itself undoubtedly has contributed to the institutionalization of protest tactics. Major changes in the social and political structure, namely the development of government regulatory agencies and the establishment of complex environmental laws, provided incentives for SMOs to switch their routines and adjust their division of labor to match the institutional structure with similarly oriented tactics. Growing public consensus about the need for environmental protection allowed movement leaders to shift attention to organizational efficiency and stability, goals better suited to institutional protest tactics than potentially alienating direct action. It follows that:

> H1: The greater the degree of bureaucratization in an environmental group, the more likely it will have institutional protest strategies mentioned in media coverage about the group, rather than direct-action strategies.

Bureaucratization and Age

Both the Weber-Michels and resource mobilization models imply that bureaucratic organizational structures are products of age, something that inevitably happens to groups over time. Indeed, age seemed to be the driving force behind bureaucratization in the Weber-Michels model; Weber envisioned that the engine of bureaucratization had a momentum that was irreversible. One of the consequences of age and increasing bureaucratization, again in both models, was a shift from direct action to "tamer," more institutionalized forms of action.

H2: There will be positive relationship both between age and level of bureaucracy, and between age and reported use of institutional protest tactics.

Bureaucratization and Media Coverage

Because the media have long since granted environmental issues a certain degree of legitimation, environmental groups do not have to strive to get brand new and unfamiliar topics onto the media agenda. But because problem definition surrounding environmental issues is a continuous and competitive process (Buttel, 1992; Hilgartner & Bosk, 1988), movement groups must continue to present their issues (and their role in them) as serious and newsworthy. As Kielbowicz and Scherer (1986) noted, movement groups are in a constant need to create "newness" in their claims to sustain media attention until such claims are resolved.

Kielbowicz and Scherer also argued that bureaucratized groups have an advantage in sustaining media attention because of the legitimated status granted organizations who establish themselves as centralized, authoritative sources. For example, the development of a public relations apparatus "can make news on demand without resorting to the extreme tactics that might prove counterproductive" (1986, p. 86).

Fishman said bureaucratic groups possess an advantage because of what he called the "principle of bureaucratic affinity," (1980, p. 143) meaning that it takes a bureaucracy to deal with a bureaucracy. Fishman concluded that bureaucratic organizations can best satisfy media demands with reliable, predictable raw materials delivered in scheduled ways.

Staggenborg acknowledged that the work routines of bureaucratic organizations are well-suited to media needs. A reporter can locate more easily an authoritative source, who works regular business hours, in groups with hierarchical, centralized structures than in decentralized groups (1988, p. 597).

Based on this discussion, one may hypothesize that:

H3: The greater the degree of bureaucratization in an environmental group, the greater the amount of media coverage it will receive.

Bureaucratic Organization and Issue Agendas

One final consideration is the relationship between bureaucratic organization and influence on institutional decision making concerning the environment. While media coverage given to environmental groups represents a direct influence in this regard, groups also may have an indirect role in shaping the issues and information the media disseminate. If the media view a certain group as legitimate, media attention to certain issues may be influenced by that group's participation in related institutional arenas (legislative bodies, courts, regulatory agencies) and by the information (news releases and other publications) it makes available.[4]

Gamson and Wolfsfeld similarly argued that the greater the resources, organization, and professionalism of a movement and the more it dedicated itself to media strategies, the greater its media standing and the more prominent its preferred coverage frame (1993, p. 121). One indication of such success is a group's ability to shape the media issue agenda to match its own, as well as participate in media discussion of those issues. Therefore, H4: The greater the degree of bureaucratization in an environmental group, the closer the relationship between the issue agenda of the environmental group and issue agenda of the media.

Methods and Measures

Given the longevity of the environmental movement and media attention given to environmental issues, one can assume that a great deal of the problem definition concerning the environment takes place at a national (if not international) level. Some scholars believe that today's environmental movement is dominated by groups that seek a national constituency and that such national groups are clearly the most visible and most influential actors for the movement (Mitchell, Mertig, & Dunlap, 1992).

Today's national environmental groups represent a wide range of sizes and organizational styles. For example, of the 16 national groups chosen for this study, six have over one million members, while two have less than 25,000 members and one (Earth First!) does not consider itself a membership organization. Size of paid staff varies widely, from nearly 1,000 to none. Many groups (particularly the largest ones) hire staff attorneys, lobbyists, scientists, and marketing consultants and typify what Zald and McCarthy (1987) refer to as "professional social movement organizations."

Based on an extensive review of published material on the environmental movement (including Brainard & McGrath, 1992; Gifford, 1990; Hansen, 1993; McCloskey, 1992; Mitchell, Mertig, & Dunlap, 1992; Pearce, 1991; Shabecoff, 1993) and consultation with environmentalists, 16 groups[5] were chosen to represent a broad cross-section of national groups in terms of size, age, tactics, location, and organizational styles. The sample is very representative of the current movement; for the largest and most prominent groups in particular, the sample can be considered all-inclusive. (Groups are listed in the next section.)

Newspaper Sampling

The primary media sampled were three large, prestigious newspapers located in important policy centers: the New York Times, Washington Post, and Los Angeles Times. Newspapers from both coasts were included to provide balance to the East Coast-based and West Coast-based environmental groups. The Washington Post was included because that city is considered the center of environmental regulation and decision making. The large news-hole in these three newspapers ensured an adequate number of stories, particularly from smaller groups.

The name of each environmental group was entered in a keyword search in the Nexis/Lexis database to locate stories.[6] The sample time frame chosen was the first nine months of 1992, which yielded close to 2,000 stories.[7] If any group was mentioned in fewer than 20 stories, oversampling was done and later weighted in appropriate analysis (oversampled N=82). Stories for all other groups were obtained through systematic random sampling. Omitted stories were those less than 10 words, wedding and obituary announcements, and duplicate stories in different editions. The final sample size was 490 stories.

In addition to coding basic story information (such as number of words, location in newspaper, and sources), specific information was coded for mentions of the 16 groups (such as tactics, issues and prominence of mention[8]).

After exploratory coding, it became apparent that environmental group participation went beyond direct action tactics (boycotts, marches, and "eco-tage") and institutional tactics ("paper protests" such as issuing statements, studies, or reports; holding news conferences; and participating in legal, regulatory, business, or political arenas). A "responder" category was added to indicate when an environmental group provided an opinion or response to the story topic, but no specific action or tactic of the group was mentioned.

All coding was done by the author. Two other coders helped establish intercoder reliability on a random sample of 25 stories for the nine key variables. Overall reliability was computed (Holsti, 1969) as 91%, and ranged from 75% to 100%.

Construction of Bureaucracy Measure

To construct the independent measure of bureaucracy, telephone surveys were conducted with each group; questions concerned internal organization, decision making, issues, goals, tactics, and media relations activities. Prior research guided the development of questions concerning internal organization, namely the work of Gamson (1990); Staggenborg (1988); Weber (trans. 1984); Blau (1974); McCarthy, Britt, and Wolfson (1991); and Zald and McCarthy (1987).

Two scales were identified initially from information obtained in the telephone survey: degree of specialization (Cronbach's alpha=.78) and internal organization (Cronbach's alpha=.85). The two scales were combined to form an overall bureaucratization scale (Cronbach's alpha of .83), which is listed in Table 1.

The bureaucracy scale was used to assign a low, medium or high bureaucracy level for each group: Audubon Society (H), Citizens' Clearinghouse for Hazardous Wastes (L), Earth First! (L), Earth Island Institute (L), Environmental Defense Fund (M), Friends of the Earth (L),

Table 1

Bureaucratization Scale

22-point scale: group received one point for presence of each item. Because of the importance of size to organizational bureaucracy, up to two points were given for staff size and number of members.

1. staff specialization: attorneys
2. staff specialization: lobbyist
3. staff specialization: scientist, experts
4. staff specialization: direct mail specialists
5. staff specialization: marketing, advertising consultants
6. staff specialization: tax consultants or accountants
7. outside dependence on public relations consultants
8-9. staff size, full-time equivalents (0 to 2 pts)
10. cross-over appointments: staff member came from government or industry
11. cross-over appointments: staff member serves on government advisory group
12. cross-over appointments: board of directors member employed by government or industry
13. cross-over appointments: staff member serves on industry board
14. mission statement or charter
15. board of directors
16. executive committee on board of directors
17. organization chart
18. field offices
19-20. number of members (0 to 2 pts)
21. perceived degree of formalization
22. type of group tactics

Discarded items:
(very low or negative correlations or reliability)

outside dependence (on attorneys, lobbyists, scientists)
presence of chapters
affiliated foundation
tax status
non-profit mailing status
perceived activity level of members
presence or absence of factions
perceived concentration of decision making

Note. Cronbach's alpha = .83

Greenpeace (M), Izaak Walton League (L), National Wildlife Federation (H), Natural Resources Defense Council (H), Nature Conservancy (H), Rainforest Action Network (L), Sea Shepherd Conservation Society (L), Sierra Club (M), Wilderness Society (M) and World Wildlife Fund (H).[9]

Results

Of the 490 stories, nearly 47% were found in the Los Angeles Times, with 23% in the Washington Post and 30% in the New York Times. There were no significant differences among newspapers in story length, location, or story type. While the three papers mentioned roughly the same number of environmental groups per story, the New York Times gave significantly fewer mentions and prominence to groups in the medium level of bureaucracy.

The environmental group is the unit of analysis for the four tested hypotheses, and one-way ANOVA means are presented with a significance level for differences between bureaucracy levels. Significance tests are presented despite the small number of groups because the means presented also represent the large random sample of newspaper stories.

H1: Bureaucracy and Protest Tactics

The data do not support the hypothesis that the greater the bureaucratization in an environmental group, the more likely institutional protest actions would be reported about that group. Table 2 shows that the data are in the hypothesized direction, but the differences are not statistically significant. All groups engaged in fairly high levels of institutional actions, perhaps not surprising due to the long history of the movement and the longevity of many of the groups

Table 2

Mean Percent of Actions of Environmental Groups by Level of Bureaucracy

	Level of Bureaucracy			
Type Action	Lo Bureauc (7)	Med Bureauc (4)	Hi Bureauc (5)	Btw. Grp Signif.
direct action	11.69	6.22	0	p=.266
institutional action	39.09	46.11	55.88	.227
responder	9.64	27.25	15.10	.092
no action	39.58	20.27	29.02	.141
	100 %	100 %	100 %	

Note. One-way ANOVA means.
"Responder" indicates no specific action by group mentioned, but group provided opinion or response to story topic.
"No action" indicates no specific action was mentioned for the group.

within it. It may be that the current decision making structures for environmental issues--highly institutionalized in agencies, laws, and regulations--are a strong shaper of the kind of action undertaken by environmental groups. Nevertheless, this finding does not support the notion that bureaucracy level determines the kind of tactics with which movement groups are associated.

H2: Bureaucratization and Age

When both age and bureaucracy were treated as ordinal variables, there was not a significant relationship; the average age of both medium and high bureaucracy groups was about 50 years (Table 3). When both age and bureaucracy were compared as ratio-level, raw scores, there was a moderate yet statistically insignificant correlation (Pearson product-moment correlation=.48).

The age of the groups also was not significantly related to the use of any type of action when age was treated as an ordinal variable. However, when age of the group was left as a ratio-level, raw score, there were statistically significant correlations for age and reported use of institutional actions (Pearson product-moment correlation=.62) and for no actions (.71) being reported.

H3: Bureaucracy and Media Coverage

The data suggest that the relationship between bureaucracy level and media coverage--hypothesized because of the advantage of resources, legitimated status, and "bureaucratic affinity" (Fishman, 1980)--may not be a linear one. As Table 4 shows, both in terms of amount and prominence in newspaper coverage, there is a statistically significant curvilinear relationship:

Table 3

Environmental Group Age and Relationship with Bureaucracy and by Tactics Used

AGE AND BUREAUCRACY

One-Way ANOVA Means

	Level of Bureaucracy			
	Lo Bureauc (7)	Med Bureauc (4)	Hi Bureauc (5)	Btw. Grp Signif.
Age (years)	23.14	52.75	49.4	p=.165

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (raw scores)
Age with Bureaucracy .48

AGE AND TACTICS

One-Way ANOVA Means

	Group Age			
Action	<18 yrs (5)	23-43 yrs (6)	58-102 yrs (5)	Btw. Grp Signif.
direct action	1.60	2.50	0.20	p=.639
institutional action	4.20	22.5	29.8	.198
responder action	0.60	10.17	9.0	.122
no action	3.0	10.0	16.6	.158

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (raw scores)
Age with:

direct action	-.23
institutional action	.62 *
responder action	.35
no action	.71 *

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* p = .01

Table 4

Environmental Group Coverage
Amount and Prominence by Level of Bureaucracy

	Level of Bureaucracy			
	Lo Bureauc* (7)	Med Bureauc (4)	Hi Bureauc (5)	Btw. grp Signif.
No. Mentions in all stories	3.59	71.75	47.0	p=.009
Overall prominence in all stories	.038	.840	.544	.010
Individual Prominence Measures				
group placement in story	.011	.240	.160	p=.013
amount group mentioned	.010	.220	.144	.010
specificity of reference	.017	.380	.240	.006

Note. One-way ANOVA means.
* Low bureaucracy group scores weighted for oversampling.

groups with a medium level of bureaucracy were most successful. Low bureaucracy groups, when adjusted for oversampling, received extremely little mention or prominence in these stories. These groups are perhaps the most needy of media coverage but are least successful getting it.

H4: Bureaucracy and Issue Agendas

Table 5 shows that there was no relationship between bureaucracy level and media issue agendas, which was tested in three different ways. In the telephone survey, environmental group respondents were asked to name the top three issues on which their group focused. In addition, each newspaper story was coded with the issue(s) with which it was concerned.

The first test was a match of issue rankings (shown in the first row of Table 5) between the groups' own identified issues and the rankings of the 12 most frequently portrayed newspaper issues. The second test (second row of Table 5) was the percentage of success that groups had being mentioned in stories that discussed the issues they had identified as most important to them. The third test (third row of Table 5) was how successful groups were in participating in the newspapers' issue agenda, as represented by the top three reported issues.

Medium and high bureaucracy groups did have an extremely high issue diversity: medium and high groups were mentioned at least once in stories about 10 of the 12 coded issues. This was statistically different from low bureaucracy groups, which were mentioned in connection with an average of about five issues (one-way ANOVA, between group significance, $p=.002$). The high issue diversity may have contributed to lack of a relationship between issue agendas; groups may strive to "cover all the bases" rather than to match closely the newspapers' issue

Table 5

Environmental Group Issue Agendas Compared with Newspaper Issue Agendas by Level of Bureaucracy

	Level of Bureaucracy			
	Lo Bureauc (7)	Med Bureauc (4)	Hi Bureauc (5)	Btw. grp Signif
Match of issue rankings	7.79	6.15	8.50	p=.192
Percent success, participation in own issues	57.84	45.83	53.35	.594
Percent success, participation in top newsp. issues	32.79	46.03	43.80	.521

Note. One-way ANOVA means.

agendas, diffusing participation success.

Summary and Discussion

This research attempted to test a dispute in the social movement literature: are high levels of bureaucracy associated with increased or decreased success, measured here as prestige-newspaper coverage an environmental group is able to secure. Contrary to the linear relationships predicted by both the Weber-Michels model and the resource mobilization model, these data suggest a curvilinear relationship between level of bureaucracy and media success. The much greater ability of medium bureaucracy groups to obtain media coverage should lead scholars to question previous assumptions about the linear relationship between bureaucracy and social movement success, and to investigate bureaucracy as more than a simple dichotomous variable.

A curvilinear relationship in many ways synthesizes these two conflicting models. To the extent that mass media coverage is the criterion, the Weber-Michels model has utility: there does appear to be a certain high level of bureaucracy beyond which groups are less effective in attracting media attention, a so-called "point of diminishing returns." However, it appears that a minimal level of bureaucracy is also necessary to garnering media coverage. The low bureaucracy groups were unable to compete for media space because, as Kielbowicz and Scherer (1986) hypothesized, they lacked an organizational structure that could establish themselves as professional, centralized, and authoritative sources.

By equating media coverage with movement group "success," the assumption is made that these groups desire more coverage. Some groups may have changed their organizational strategies to concentrate their involvement and participation in other institutional arenas, rather than on obtaining media coverage. After all, media visibility represents only one aspect of organizational information control, and at times, groups may avoid media visibility and actually withhold information.

However, all the medium and high bureaucracy groups reported in the telephone survey that media coverage was either fairly or extremely important to group goals, and high bureaucracy groups had hired the largest PR staffs to carry out that mission. It is plausible that increasing bureaucratization brings an opportunity to expand movement strategies into other areas, be they legal, political, or educational. But according to these group informants, such expansion has not taken place at the expense of also working diligently to obtain media coverage.

If high bureaucracy environmental groups are indeed striving for media coverage, and in very sophisticated ways, why the decreased ability to get coverage? One could speculate that one "cost" of increasing bureaucracy is increasing organizational rigidity. A rigid organization is less able to make quick adjustments in its operation and may be better prepared for proactive campaigns than for reactive ones (including serving as media "responders"). Organizational rigidity can also mean an inward focus on maintenance. Therefore, a larger media staff may spend more time in organizational maintenance and is unable to obtain a proportionately larger share of media coverage.

Bureaucracy, as suggested by the resource mobilization model, has no doubt enabled environmental movement groups to survive adverse issue conditions and to take advantage of favorable conditions for over a century. Yet bureaucracy may have limited appeal as a positive "resource" and deserves to be further investigated.

The pessimistic predictions of Michels' "iron law of oligarchy" and Weber's "iron cage" of bureaucracy, while of utility for understanding movement groups and media coverage, has proved too rigid a scenario and is not an automatic outcome of aging movement groups. However, this model also predicts that social movements will eventually resemble the surrounding social order, which can be said of the institutionally oriented activities of the oldest environmental groups. The outcome of structural resemblance, said Weber and Michels, is accommodation and cooptation.

Cooptation or Access to Power

If higher bureaucracy groups have emulated the bureaucratic characteristics and structures of the "power elite" (Mills, 1956) does this resemblance indicate cooptation, or instead, an increased access to power and less need to rely on media coverage for obtaining group goals? Perhaps a little of both: environmental groups have gained increasing amounts of access, but some would argue, not proportional increases in success.[10]

Since the growth of the governmental environmental bureaucracy (which the movement worked hard to create), many environmental groups have hired their own legal staffs and lobbyists to better participate in political and governmental decision making. Environmental groups have cultivated connections with the power elite, such as corporate donations and cross-over appointments (from government and industry) to boards of director and paid staff. This degree of access to power may mean that bureaucratic environmental groups no longer must continually pound the pavement "giving gospel" about environmental values.

But the movement's connections with and reliance on the power structure to protect the environment has not achieved group goals. During the 1980s, highly professional environmental groups were unable to stop political and governmental institutions from undoing or weakening resource protection. Shabecoff's (1993) history of the environmental movement noted that despite the abundance of environmental laws, there have been minimal changes in basic underlying social and economic values that lead to environmental degradation. According to a 1993 Roper poll, even the general public, who now generally accepts environmentalism and environmental values, believes the environmental movement has stalled. All this suggests a movement coopted by the power structure, or by Gamson's (1990) definition a movement that has gained acceptance but not sought-after advantages.

One might speculate that if the high bureaucracy groups in particular have been coopted by the power establishment, they should get more media coverage--not less--because the media support and uphold establishment values. These high bureaucracy groups did receive significantly less criticism and slightly more mobilizing information than medium bureaucracy groups,[11] but not more overall coverage. It may be that their connections and structural similarities to the power elite have made them easier to ignore--and politely marginalize--in the media debate.

Herein lies the paradox: the more that environmental movement groups resemble or try to work with the power elite, the less attractive they may become as news sources who can speak in positions of authority and power for the environmental movement. Working with the power elite and institutions cannot be considered, however, a new or changed organizational strategy for the environmental movement. All of the older groups have a long history of participation in institutional arenas and have worked as partners with government and business perhaps as often as they have battled them. For example, the Audubon Society had extremely close ties with the White House during Teddy Roosevelt's presidency. A coalition of conservation groups, government, and business worked to establish Yellowstone National Park. In 1915, the Sierra Club was able to secure $10,000 from the California legislature to build the John Muir Trail in honor of the club's first president. Although the groups represent a broad ideology that ranges from utilitarian to staunch preservation, the modern movement differs little from its roots in the intellectual elite who sought modest protections and not a drastic reformulation of the basic human-nature relationship. And modest reform groups are a more logical target of cooptation by the power elite.

Bureaucracy and Age

Much of the prior research has implied that formalized, bureaucratic organizational structures were products of age, an inevitable consequence for movement groups over time. Although this study did not find clearcut associations between bureaucracy and age, it is a relationship that deserves further investigation, for instance the correlation between age and the use of institutional tactics. Although increasing group age does not signal an abrupt abandonment of direct action, direct action is not a frequently reported tactic, regardless of group, in these newspapers. It is also noteworthy that the older the group, the more likely that no group activities were reported at all, perhaps another indication that older, established groups are politely marginalized.

Environmental Groups as Media Participants

What is perhaps a telling indication of SMO participation in media discussion of the environment is the nature of the groups' involvement in media stories, as well as their success in participating in issues deemed important to them.

According to Goodwyn (1978), social protest under narrow and limited conditions is not only permissible in a democratic society, it is also positively desirable. Goodwyn held that protest fortifies the popular understanding that society is functioning democratically and working to correct its social problems.

But engaging in social protest, even when using socially acceptable institutional protest tactics, does not guarantee media coverage for any protest group. And resource-rich bureaucratic groups in this study did not have an advantage in presenting more group protest tactics to the newspaper public, institutional or otherwise.

As Hilgartner and Bosk (1988) maintain, problem definition of social issues is a continuous process, and participants continually struggle to present their issues and their role in them. These groups, while participating in some fashion, nevertheless often *don't* succeed in getting their group's role or actions across to the newspaper public--obvious in the high percentage of "no action" reported in connection with all of these groups. Whatever merit having one's group mentioned in the *New York Times* may hold, such merit is less significant when the reader is given no idea if the group is doing anything regarding the issue. The actions taken by these SMOs may not be taken as seriously or given as much attention as actions of more powerful individuals and groups. Although most of these groups present relatively mild "threats" by the changes they seek, as movement groups they nevertheless still challenge the operation of institutions in the dominant power structure.

Despite environmental group factions during the 1970s and early 1980s that helped spawn a new radical arm of the movement (see Devall, 1992; Foreman, 1991; Manes, 1990; Merchant, 1992; Scarce, 1990), direct action is simply not portrayed as a frequently used tactic in these newspapers. (The primary exceptions came from two of the seven low bureaucracy groups, Earth First! and Sea Shepherd, and one of the four medium bureaucracy groups, Greenpeace.) Some scholars have suggested that resource-poor movement groups in particular must create disruptions in order to obtain coverage, but disruptions may just as likely be ignored by prestigious media as threatening to the status quo. What is unknown, however, is whether these groups (and others) actually use direct action much more frequently but which goes unreported by these (and perhaps other) papers.

This study suggests that none of these national environmental groups has the ability to dominate or even define the environmental issue agenda in these prestige newspapers. As hypothesized by Gamson and Wolfsfeld (1993), the more resources and organization a group had, the greater its media standing and preferred coverage frame would be. Although these simple issue agenda measures do not attempt to quantify "preferred frames," they do nevertheless call into question the notion that resources help a group shape the media issue agenda. More resources may help groups take on more issues, but it does not mean that high-resource groups are necessarily able to participate more fully in any of them. Certainly, other factors noted by researchers play an important role in media gatekeeping decisions regarding environmental issues, factors such as drama, visual qualities, timing, prominence, and the nature of the conflict (Olien, Tichenor, & Donohue, 1984; Kielbowicz & Scherer, 1986; Molotch, 1979). In addition, the sheer number of environmental issues makes it less likely that a group could hold a dominant position in relation to any one of them; this contrasts with single-issue movements such as abortion or gun control.

Although movement groups may sometimes influence media reporting decisions, journalists most often take their gatekeeping cues from the power structure of which they are a part. One cue may be that medium bureaucracy groups appear less coopted, more powerful and are better able to speak for the movement. In this study, these groups are also ones that possess a great deal of prestige and professionalism (most notably Sierra Club and Greenpeace). Such prestige may ultimately outweigh the importance of large, resource-rich bureaucratic structures and may matter most with media gatekeepers who are agents of power in the social control of conflict and change.

Individual group power and prestige notwithstanding, the environmental issue agenda remains the purview of the power elite in government, business, and politics. The coverage illustrates that these newspapers have lots of news sources and potential stories, and do not necessarily need a strong hand from national environmental groups. As Gamson and Wolfsfeld aptly point out, "The fact that movements need the media far more than the media need them translates into greater power for the media in the transaction" (1993, p. 117). But as these scholars acknowledge, the media are agents of power, not direct possessors of it: "Journalists...do not invent the rules of access [to media coverage]; these are structural, reflecting power differences between actors in the larger society" (1993, p. 119).

NOTES

1. Gadi Wolfsfeld (1991, p. 29) criticized this as a tenet of structural research.

2. See also an anecdotal report by Steinem (1990) regarding advertising in Ms. and an historical account in Miller (1992) about public relations' role in marketing and advertising cigarettes.

3. Frey, Dietz, and Kalof (1992), in their reanalysis of Gamson's data and the data of his critics, investigated the contributions of 12 variables on gaining new advantages. They found that the variables most strongly associated with group success were displacement goals (adverse to success because displacement is so hard to achieve), factionalism (adverse to success because it diverts and drains resources) and the use of violence. The researchers concluded that the degree of bureaucracy had little effect on overall group success.

4. Strodthoff, Hawkins, and Schoenfeld (1985) found that both substantive and doctrinal information from environmental groups flowed more or less intact from the specialized environmental press through the mass media to the general public.

5. Eighteen groups were chosen initially; two (Defenders of Wildlife and Conservation International) refused to participate in a telephone survey to determine the level of bureaucracy and were dropped from the study.

6. Electronic data bases, which can prove problematic particularly in locating a universe of topical stories, can work well when used to search for stories with very specific keywords. Because this research is concerned with a sample of media coverage, is located in one database, and uses very specific keyword search commands, database searching was deemed an appropriate method of data collection. See Neuzil (1992) and Kaufman, Dykers, & Caldwell (1994). For a discussion of use of key words in database searches, see Corbett (1993a).

7. Initially, the entire 12 months of the year were chosen. The last three months were eliminated from the study in order not to bias the sample toward groups whose tax status permits political lobbying. Many of the stories in these last three months concerned Presidential election year endorsements.

8. The prominence score was based on Shoemaker's (1988) prominence score, which included the place in the story each group was first mentioned, number of paragraphs in which the group was mentioned and the specificity of the mention.

9. In addition to treating bureaucracy as a ordinal variable, bureaucracy was tested as a continuous ratio-level variable using correlation analysis. The results of correlation analyses are noted for the hypothesis concerning age. But for the other hypotheses, ANOVA means better illustrate the striking curvilinear relationships found in some instances than correlation analysis' consideration of linear relationships.

10. For an interesting discussion of environmentalists gaining access but losing ground, see Dowie's (1994) "A Lighter Shade of Green."

11. Criticism of group or activities, one-way ANOVA means, between group significance, p=.011. Mobilizing information presented for groups, one-way ANOVA means, between group significance, p=.224.

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How People Use Newspaper-Sponsored Community Bulletin Boards: A Field Test of *The Evansville Courier* 's Courier On-Line

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Abstract

A computer bulletin board service (BBS) operated by *The Evansville Courier* (a Scripps-Howard newspaper) was field-tested on a convenience sample of 1150 people with regular access to computers and modems in the small, Mid-western city of Evansville, IN. The four-week field-test measured Ss' bulletin board usage as well as surveying their impressions of the service and asking basic demographic questions.

Qualitative and descriptive quantitative results indicate that most people who own computers with modems are not yet computer and BBS "literate" enough to want access to these services. On the other hand, of the 1150 who were encouraged to try the service, most were middle to upper income, well educated, computer and BBS literate individuals who would appreciate regular access to a BBS operated by a traditional newspaper. Further, it was determined that such a service—although it may be in part repackaging existing material—cannot be operated solely by existing newspaper staff. Additional personnel must be hired in order to fulfill the burgeoning number of tasks involved in running a BBS. Finally, it was suggested that a service run by a "traditional mass media outlet" could best serve its public and differentiate itself in the market by relying on its strengths—providing global and local news and information in both traditional and more interactive forms.

How People Use Newspaper-Sponsored Community Bulletin Boards: A Field Test of *The Evansville Courier 's* Courier On-Line

Introduction & Review of the Literature

In the rapidly changing media world, it is *critical*, from both an academic and an industry perspective, to determine what information should be provided to the public via computer bulletin board services (BBS). Additionally, we must be able to predict how new means of telecommunication will affect traditional community news distributors. Much more work needs to be done in looking at how the new technological services are used. The current study provides descriptive data of a four-week field test of a computer bulletin board service sponsored by a traditional daily newspaper, *The Evansville Courier* (a Scripps-Howard newspaper), in a medium-sized mid-Western community—Evansville, Indiana.

Recent legal and technological trends have allowed various mass media services to converge. At the national level, many media corporations are investing in their traditional competitors (e.g., telephone companies trying to enter the cable marketplace). This is also happening at the local level. For both community-service and profit-oriented reasons, many media corporations are looking at ways to repackage their news and information so that it can be provided in a variety of media channels.

After a decade of sitting on the sidelines while a few brave pioneers experimented with BBSs, nearly everyone is now "going on-line." News Corporation of America (which owns both print and broadcast facilities) plans to acquire Delphi Internet Services, the nation's fifth largest on-line-service. Gannet's *Florida Today* is accessible on CompuServe. Cox and Times-Mirror plan to put services on Prodigy. There is a venture involving IBM and Sears, and Knight-Ridder and Tribune Company already provide services on America On-line, the nation's third-largest and fastest growing service. In fact, more than 2,700 newspapers are now experimenting with one or another kind of electronic venture, compared to only 42 in 1989; part of the urgency for the experiment is that almost half of young people 18 to 24 years old don't read newspapers at all.[1]

New York-based *Newsday* recently performed a telephone caller survey on their service, Newsday On-line (which has been in existence since 1985) obtaining 602 responses (40% response rate). They found that over 78% of their responding users had at least some college education, with 29% holding a post-graduate degree. Over 32% were between 35 and 44 years old, 24% were between 25 and 34, and only 10% were between 18 and 24. Sixty percent had a household income above $40,000 and 35% had incomes above $60,000.[2]

According to a nationwide study of 4000 households conducted by the Times Mirror Center for The People & The Press, although 65% of respondents to one question said they liked computers and technology, only 12% of American households have a modem-equipped computer. Six percent of Americans (11 million) go on-line regularly. Age was a significant factor in computer use and likability. Education and income-level were again shown to be factors—particularly in use of computer on-line services. It was also found that technophiles do not forsake older forms of communication, but rather increase their information intake.[3]

One trend at the local level is for one or more of a community's news media outlets to repackage their existing material, enhance it with additional information and offer it through computer bulletin boards. According to Macaraeg, "bulletin board systems (BBS) are an excellent, economical alternative to large on-line information systems...."[4] However, there is great financial risk in developing and running a BBS—even if the primary goal is to provide a community service at a break-even cost. Of the over 53,000 computer bulletin boards in North American, only 5 percent make a profit and only 15 percent break even.[5] Clearly, traditional media organizations traveling down this new road—with virtually no experience in delivering information through computer and modem, or in how to finance such a new venture—must drive very carefully.[6]

Even if such a bulletin board was provided as a community service—and is designed only to recoup operating costs rather than make a profit—a new entrant into this medium is faced with the daunting dilemma of deciding what to provide and how to provide it. Services some might find useful would dissuade other users from participating.[7] Further, usage will also be related to the "friendliness" of interfaces—and access to a variety of "real people" through the BBS.[8] Some companies are looking into transmitting "newspapers" by coaxial cable rather than non-fiber telephone lines, because they will allow for an easier (through the TV) user interface and a much more colorful and graphical product.[9]

Individuals who travel the electronic highway are primarily "technological innovators" who would quickly become bored with local movie listings and "flame wars" with local editorial columnists. However, many in the general public who patronize a community's primary newspaper and/or major radio and broadcast TV services are "techno-phobes" who may feel uncomfortable obtaining any information from a computer bulletin board—even if it was more convenient than the traditional methods. It has been shown that many user-oriented variables affect the likelihood of a board being successful in a community.[10]

A major aspect of public usage of a local bulletin board is the added stress associated with the "trouble" involved in computer usage. Asking people to subject themselves to this stress for the purpose of obtaining news they could more easily get from a newspaper may eventually turn interested people off to the idea of BBS usage. Not knowing what is available can also deter bulletin board usage. Most people are not aware of the numerous services available through the various systems. If users are not able to access something that they would enjoy because they do not know it exists, then usage will be low regardless of "ease of use." Without prior knowledge of how the public will react to various BBS elements, a traditional news business entering this field would seem doomed to failure.

Not only are the local media outlets faced with this dilemma, but the colleges and universities that provide the employees for these media are also challenged:

> Journalism schools need to pay more attention to computer mediated communication (CMC). In recent years, CMC has taken many forms, including electronic mail and bulletin boards. More media organizations and media professionals have begun to use CMC, and media companies are

among the firms providing CMC services in the general market. Such developments make familiarity with CMC necessary for the technologically competent media professional.[11]

Clearly, the flow of news and other information through CMC sources is burgeoning and will continue to grow exponentially.[12] For now, however, a picture of a greatly divided potential user base emerges—much interest in and understanding of this new medium is limited to a handful of potential users, while the vast majority lack the technology , computer usage skills, desire, and/or time to participate in this rapidly expanding telecommunication channel.

However, as bulletin board services begin to play a larger role in news distribution, traditional journalists and media corporations are going to have to be knowledgeable enough in this still emerging medium to compete effectively. Institutions involved in researching the media's role in society—as well as in training future journalists—must also be aware of the role computer bulletin boards will play in local news.

Issues to be Explored

The primary purpose of this study was to further the research on what consumers want from community-based computer bulletin board services that have been sponsored by traditional local media outlets. A unique opportunity to perform such a study existed because *The Evansville Courier* —the primary daily newspaper in the mid-sized mid-western city of Evansville, Indiana—agreed to work with us in field testing their soon-to-be-released local service.

Large-scale field studies lend themselves to certain types of research. As external validity rises, internal validity can fall. In the case of the current study (as will be clarified in the method section), obtaining a true random sample was impossible, so a very large, but self-selecting, convenience sample was considered acceptable. Given the type of sample available and due to the exploratory nature of research in this area, descriptive results were the focus of this study. It is hoped that this analysis will provide some solid, non-proprietary, information about computer bulletin board use that will be of value to both industry and academic professionals.

Research Method

The Bulletin Board Service

The *Courier On-Line* BBS service was readied for a start date of Monday, July 11 for a four-week field analysis. Data gathering would officially cease on Sunday, August 7—although the board would remain operational. The service consisted of national and local news and information, games, electronic mail (with other service users only), a photo file, discussion groups, and classified ads. No "display" advertising existed on the board during the test phase. Participants had free, unlimited access to the board—provided they could log in. The service initially had seven 14,400 baud dial-up modems. This was upped to 12 high speed modems toward the end of the test phase (July 27). The board was primarily text based—with ANSI graphics available. IBM compatible PC users were able to download a graphics package (RIP Term) which would offer a Windows-like interface to the BBS.

Sample

An initial attempt was made to obtain a random sample of computer and modem owners, but the majority of those who were called either did not have access or did not know how to use their system yet. Due to time limitations, it was decided to advertise the service test and use a self-selected convenience sample.

Our sample was gathered through publishing information about the test in several local outlets. *The Evansville Courier* newspaper promoted the service with display advertisements, one or two feature articles, and through their telephone call-in service. Announcements about the study were also posted on several local computer bulletin boards and on the general news computer bulletin boards at both the University of Evansville and the University of Southern Indiana—two small schools in the Evansville area, one private and the other state affiliated. Within the first four days of the study, however, over 250 different people had logged on, completed the opening survey, and spent some time on the bulletin board. By the end of the study, over 1100 people had used the service at least once.

Measures

Data were designed to consist of a mandatory opening survey, usage statistics (generated during board use), and a voluntary "closing survey" that was to be filled out just before a subject logged off for good.

The Opening Survey

This survey consisted of a variety of demographic questions. Psychographic questions were also included in order to better describe respondents' computer usage levels prior to participation on our BBS. It was designed in such a way that it had to be completed in order for someone to access the rest of the BBS service.

Courier On-Line Usage Data

Test phase usage data consisted of quantitative material on the number of hours spent on the board during the four-week test period as well as a breakdown of the various types of usage into several categories.

Closing Surveys

Closing surveys were designed to be filled out just before a respondent logged off the service for the last time. Thus, they were voluntary for those who dropped out of the board early. Throughout the fourth week, completion of the survey became mandatory in order to reenter the board. Once someone finished the closing survey, they were officially "out of the test" and additional usage statistics were not tabulated. The closing survey measured—in both a quantitative and a qualitative fashion—what people liked and did not like about *Courier On-Line*.

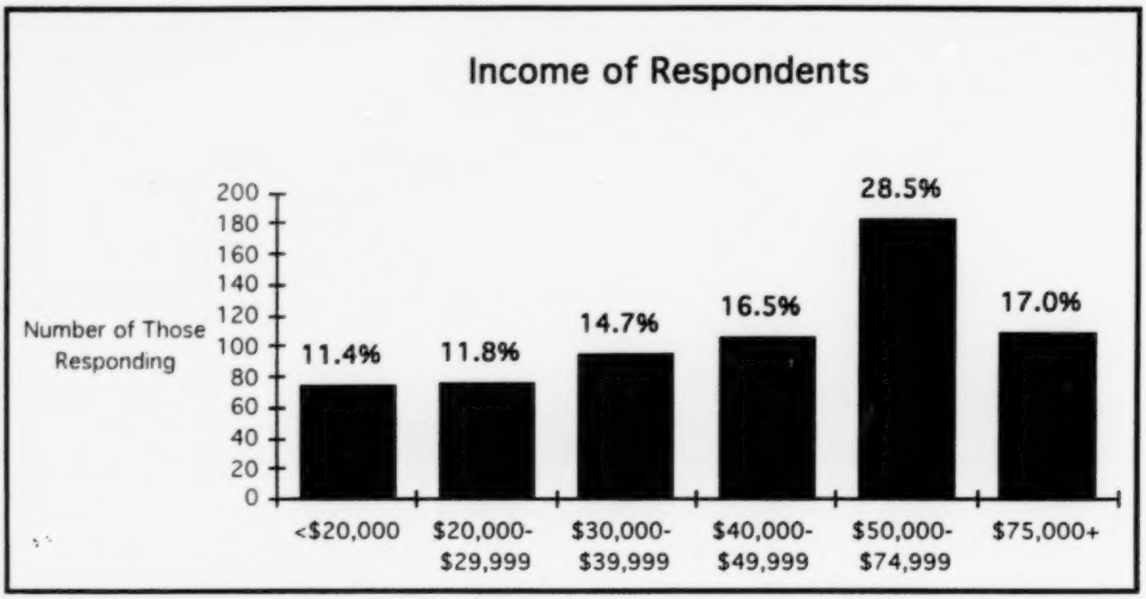
Results

The Opening Survey

Nearly everyone who participated in the study answered the opening survey (although a few figured out ways to get around it). The opening survey provided basic information about the people who participated in our study and their computer usage. This information could be broken down into: basic demographics, computer ownership and use, modem and BBS usage, and computer software usage.

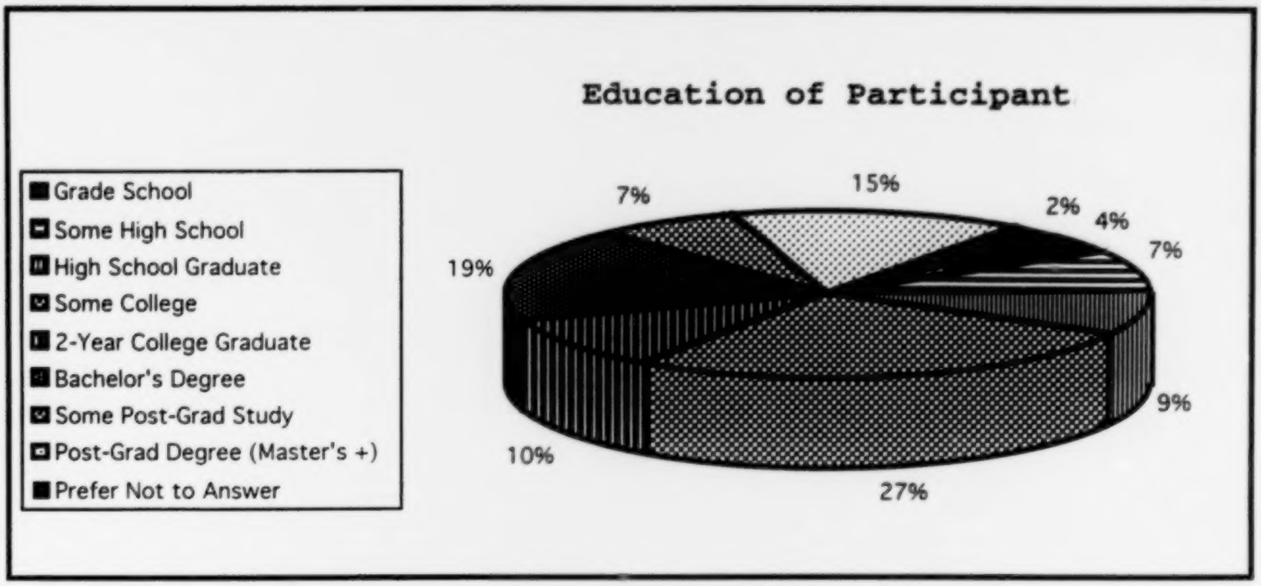
Demographic Questions

Income. Of the 861 people who responded to a question about income, nearly 27% (231) chose not to reveal how much their household made annually. Of the remaining 638 respondents: 11.4% (73) had incomes of less than $20,000; 11.8% (75) made between $20,000 and $29,999; 14.7% (94) made between $30,000 and $39,999; 16.5% (105) made between $40,000 and $49,999; 28.5% (182) reported an income of $50,000 to $74,999; and 17% (109) had a household income of $75,000 or more.



Clearly, the majority of those participating in the study—who chose to respond to the question—were middle and upper income. However, it must be noted that a quarter of the subjects did not respond to the question. Also, due to the structure of the questionnaire, income categories are not all approximately equal—that may cause the distribution to appear to skewed.

Education. Nearly all of the 869 people who filled out the opening survey chose to answer this question.



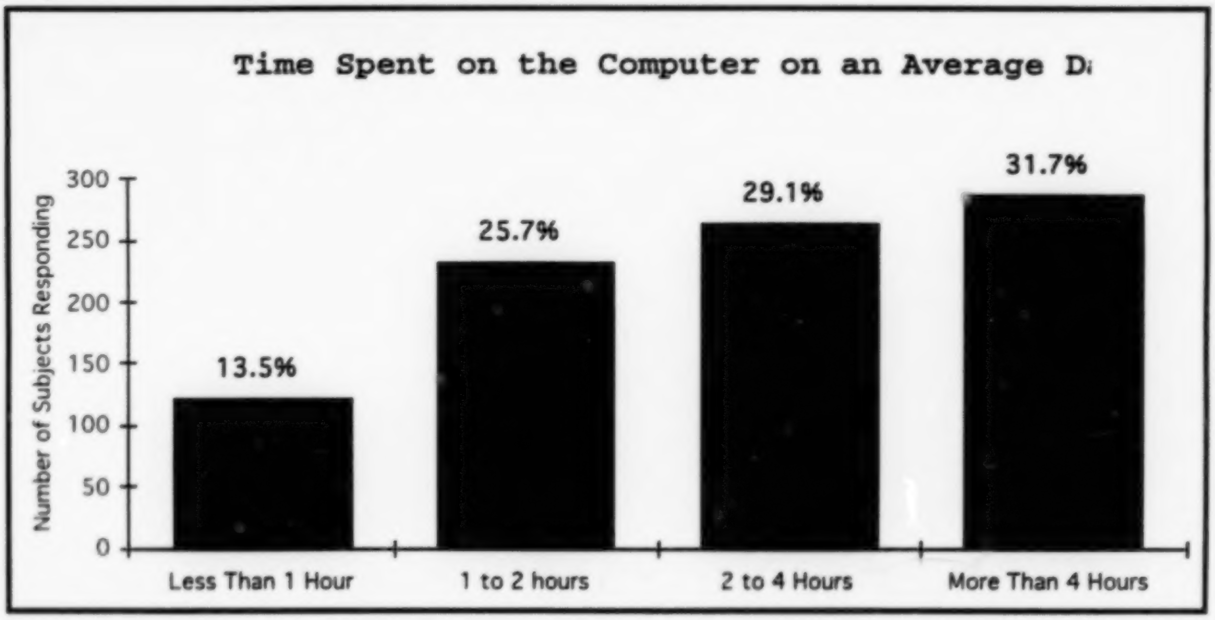
The vast majority of the participants in our study had at least some college education. Forty-one percent (349) held a bachelor's degree or higher level of education. Another 37% of our sample held at least an associates' degree.

Household Makeup. Nearly 900 participants told us how many adults and children were in their households. The vast majority of households (584 or 65%) contained 2 adults. About 16% (143) of households contained 3 adults while 12% (109) were one-adult households. Most of the households in the study (385 or 43%) did not have any children. About 24% (212) had one child in the home and another 24% (218) had two children. Only 9.1% (83) of the sample had 3 or more children in the home.

Computer Ownership and Use

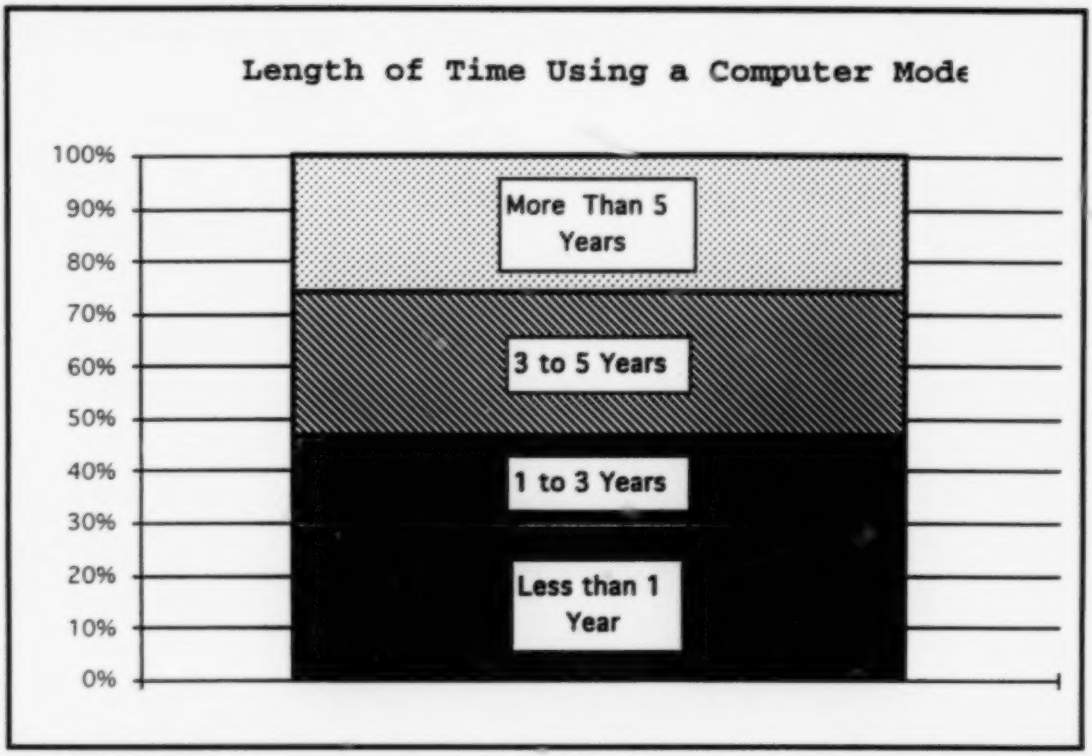
Ownership. Fully 91.5% (837) of those responding to our survey owned the computer they used to access *Courier On-Line.* Only 8.5% (77) of the sample did not own their own computers. The length of ownership varied widely across the sample. The vast majority of the sample have owned a computer for at least a year (701 or 84%). Most (350 or 42%) have owned a computer for over five years. Of those who didn't own a computer, the majority accessed a computer for the test from their place of work (59%) or at a neighbor's home (31%). Interestingly, no one accessed a computer they did not own at a local college or university—probably because most of those computers, while "hard wired" to the Internet, are not equipped with dial-out modems. Eleven percent of those who didn't own a computer used a portable or laptop machine.

Computer Use. Regardless of ownership, the majority of our subjects have used a computer for more than 5 years (508 of 909 respondents or 56%). Only a small portion of the sample has used a computer for less than one year (76 or 8%). On any given day, the people in our sample varied in their computer usage.



Modem and Bulletin Board Usage

Modems. Naturally, all of the people in our study had access to a modem-equipped computer, but 7% (65 of 909 respondents) had never used their modem before. Of those who had used a modem before, experience levels varied.



The speed of modems used clearly fell into two distinct categories, relatively slow and quite fast. In our study, 45% (408) of the participants were using a 2400 baud modem. The next greatest percentage, 30% (274) were using 14,400 baud modems. The remainder used a variety of speeds ranging from less than 1200 baud to more than 19,200. Only 4% of the subjects that answered this question (32 of 904) did not know what speed their modem was.

Bulletin Board Usage. Even in this relatively high income and education sample, bulletin board usage was fairly evenly split. A full third (34%) of those responding (288 of 841 responding) had used a BBS for less than one year. Forty-four percent (371) had used such services for one to five years. Twenty-two percent of those responding (182) had used on line services for more than five years.

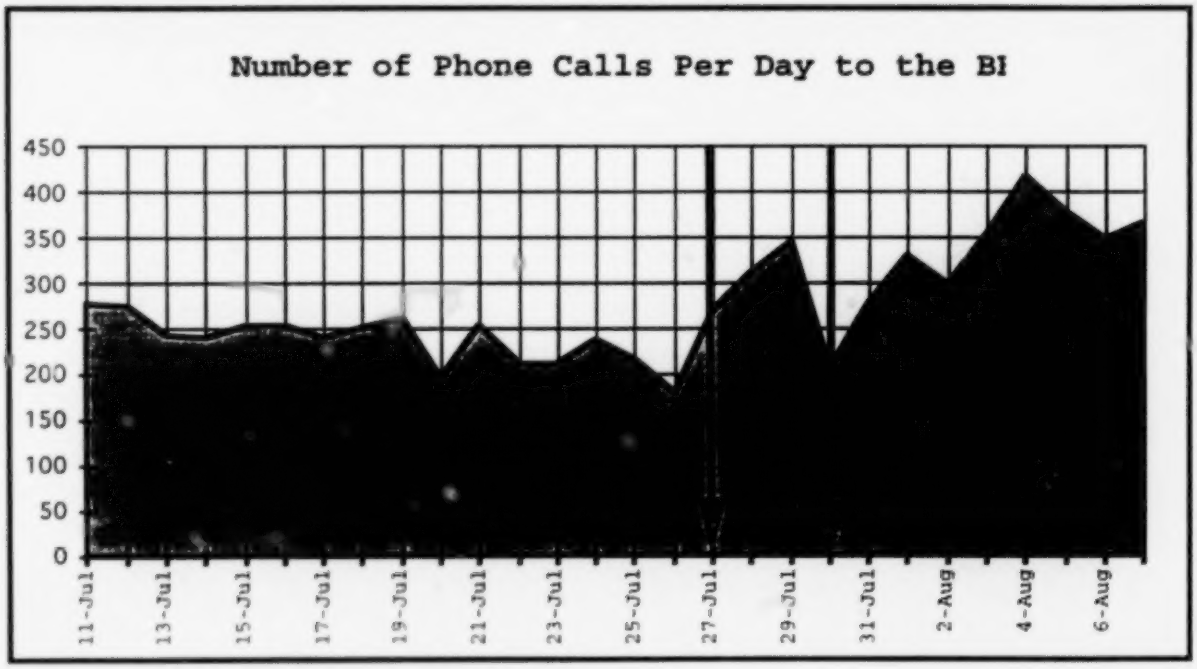
About 42% (373 of 880) of those responding said they used electronic mail services often or very often. Over 41% (367) use email occasionally while 16% (140) said that they had never used it before.

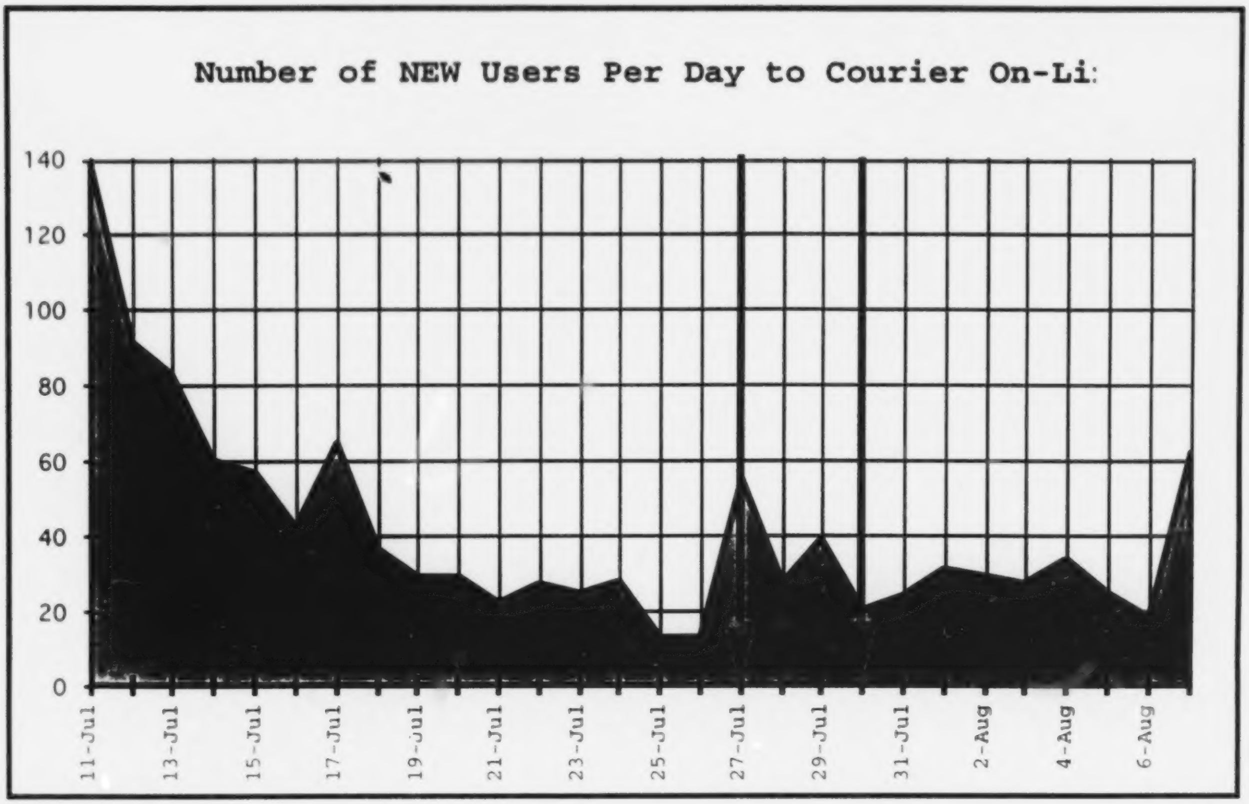
Of national services like America OnLine, CompuServe and Prodigy, 34% (300 of

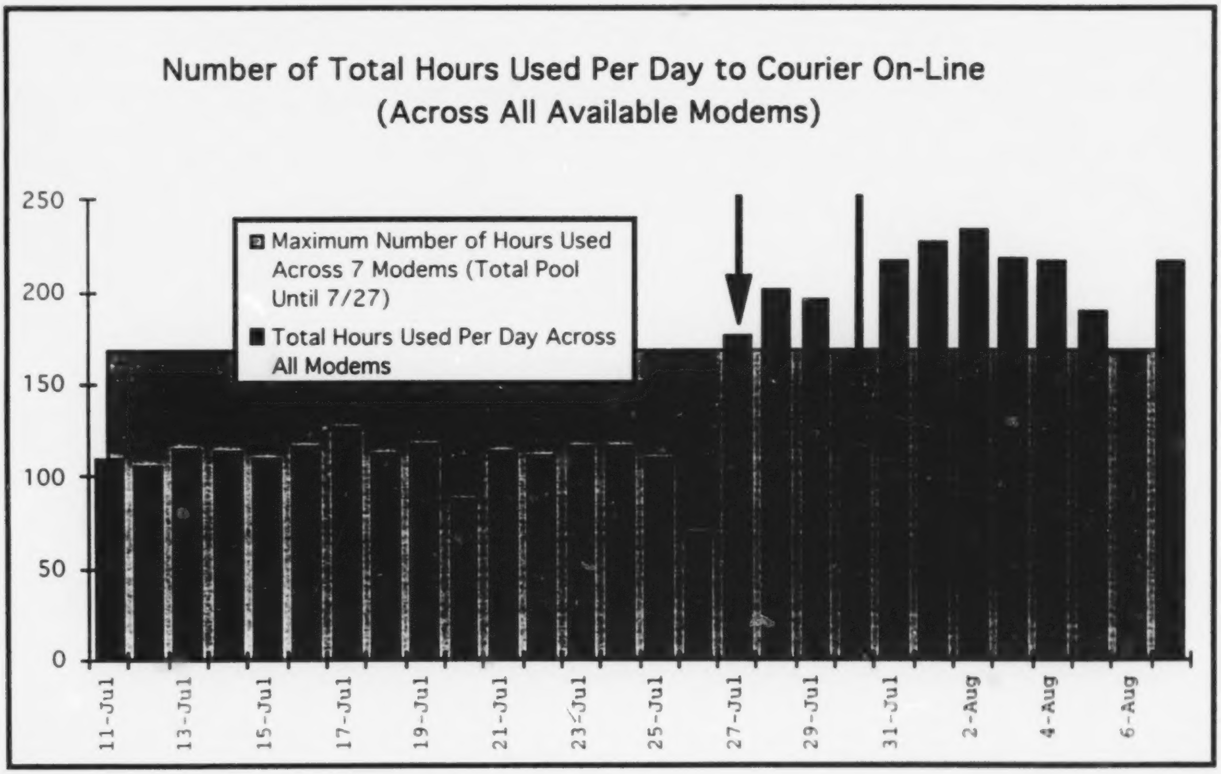
878) of those responding had never used them. Another third rarely used such services while about 36% used them quite often. Almost no one in the sample used the Internet. Forty-three percent said that they had never used it and/or did not know what it was. Another 30% said that they rarely used it. Only 14% said that they used it often.

Usage of the *Courier On-Line* BBS Service

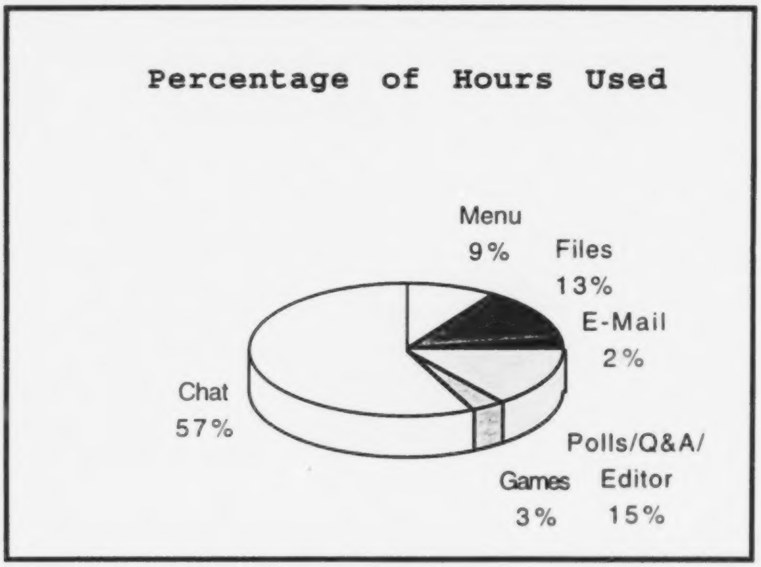
The *Courier On-Line* bulletin board service test began on Monday, July 11, 1994 and ran through Sunday, August 7, 1994—a total of four weeks. The service ran "non-stop" except for routine maintenance and the occasional system shutdown. (The longest crash was for an eight-hour period on July 30.) Another change that probably affected usage data was an increase in the modem pool. At the beginning of the study, seven modems were available for dial-up access to *Courier On-Line*. Due to the great influx of calls, the pool was upped to 12 lines on July 27. In looking at the usage data, it is probably safe to suggest that a strong interest in the service early on was tempered by the trouble some people had dialing in. The seven lines were nearly always busy, resulting in a drop off of new users. However, after five more lines were installed, usage appeared to rise again.




Number of NEW Users Per Day to Courier On-Li
140
120
100
80
60
40
20
0
11-Jul
13-Jul
15-Jul
17-Jul
19-Jul
21-Jul
23-Jul
25-Jul
27-Jul
29-Jul
31-Jul
2-Aug
4-Aug
6-Aug


Number of Total Hours Used Per Day to Courier On-Line
(Across All Available Modems)
250
200
150
100
50
0
Maximum Number of Hours Used Across 7 Modems (Total Pool Until 7/27)
Total Hours Used Per Day Across All Modems
11-Jul
13-Jul
15-Jul
17-Jul
19-Jul
21-Jul
23-Jul
25-Jul
27-Jul
29-Jul
31-Jul
2-Aug
4-Aug
6-Aug

A total of 1150 different people used the service for a total of 4117 hours during the four-week test period. While on the board, users spent most of their time conversing with other users. Over half of users' time spent on the board was spent using the Teleconference or Chat area. This is interesting, given the concerns some had over the appropriateness of Teleconference and Chat services on a BBS run by a newspaper (see next section of the paper).



The Closing Survey

Over 200 of the 1150 participants volunteered their feelings about *Courier On-Line* and its various services by answering several open-ended questions toward the end of their fourth week of using the board. These people as a whole had a wonderful attitude towards this venture into 'cyberspace.' A general feeling of approval manifested throughout the survey responses. One respondent summed up the feelings of the group well:

> "The great advantage of the net is its potential for re-opening people's channels of communication and expression. Too much of our national political and philosophical "dialogue" is channeled to us one-way through pre-approved sources; the average person is lucky to have a voice that travels past the end of his block. The more technology is available to allow ordinary

> people, unblessed with the power to control magazine or broadcast content, the opportunity to be heard and understood by their peer citizens, the better."

Participants were asked to state which services they liked or disliked—and why. The qualitative information provided was most enlightening. Not everyone discussed each individual service, but all made some comment. The following is a summary of these qualitative user impressions of various *Courier On-Line* services.

Tele-Chat and Electronic Mail

Two of the most popular, but controversial, areas were the Tele-chat and Electronic Mail sections. No single person who registered disapproval of Tele-chat cited lack of enjoyment of the area itself. Most of them just thought that it was misplaced on a BBS sponsored by a news service. They thought that it took up to much of the computer resources at hand, especially modem resources. There were no registered dislikes of E-Mail. Of those responding, 87% liked telechat and only 13% did not.

Games

Another area that brought slight controversy was the on-line games section. Again, nobody said that they plain 'didn't enjoy it,' rather just questioned its place on this BBS. Fifty-five percent of the comments were favorable, but 45% were not:

> "There are BBS's available for kid's to use to play games. I would feel a board sponsored by a news agency could better develop their resources toward information and education."

> "I don't think the *Courier* BBS needs to carry games. There are plenty of other BBS's carrying that [sic] sort of files. It just adds to the congestion on the board, I fear."

"The games were fun and an enjoyable way to relax at the end of the day."

Archives

All complaints received concerning the Archives dealt with the ease of use of the search and retrieval system—that was not very "user friendly." These complaints were mostly from people who were unfamiliar with or new to computers. Fully 79% of the responses were positive:

> "I am interested primarily in searching archived articles on local and national/international past events. E.g., right now I would like to review the history of the small park area on Campground Road that the Utility Board might sell to the city to convert into a new park. I know that in the past it was mostly used by dope peddlers at night! I am also interested in computer-related news and files."

> "The main reason I really like this service (Courier On-line) is that I can get access to old news files, and look at advertising. I have very little time to set down and read the paper. Therefore looking up needed information quickly on-line is very nice. I think that this service will prove to be very successful."

> "The Archives are the only index to the Courier conveniently available. Having full-text immediately available is frosting on the cake."

> "The Archives found what I searched for pretty fast, but it seemed clunky and was hard to use."

Sports

There were a surprising number of comments about the sports section. No one who finished the survey greatly disliked the section, they just mentioned that they didn't care for sports at all (perhaps a characteristic of this sample). Others were adamant about their devotion towards sports in general. Fifty-six percent of the respondents liked access to the sports stories and statistics, but 44% did not:

> "First of all, as the mother of a minor league baseball player, I love being able to check on the minor league boxscores to see how he does every night. As far as I am concerned this is the best area on this board......of course I love all the other features also."

> "There are many sports stories that won't be in the paper and I can read them now with your on-line service."

> "Either way you look at it, I believe that the sports section is very worthwhile, and is an important part of *Courier On-Line*."

Reviews

The reviews section, like most of the other sections, got mixed reviews. In this section, *Courier* staffers posted film and resturaunt reviews. Interest in this section was split 50/50. Many people were indifferent to it:

> "I'm glad to have a place where I can check out the new movies or restaurants. It is oftentimes nice to have someone else's opinion before trying something new."

> "I don't go to movies or restaurants, at least not based on reviews, so I have little use for this information."

Opinion

Almost all of the people, expressing an *opinion* about the *Opinion* section enjoyed the articles available (83%). Very few had anything negative to say (17%) about this section of the board where editorial pieces were placed:

> "I'm not interested in a newspaper reporters opinion as a reporter but would be interested of their own opinion. However, I still enjoyed that area of Courier On-Line."

> "People tend to go overboard in the opinion section, not keeping their opinions brief and concise. It's a belly-aching department."

Advertising

Although the test board did not run advertising, respondents were asked to report their feelings about ads on the BBS. As suspected, the possibility of advertising elicited mostly negative feelings(71% against). Although some were happy to be able to find good bargains (28%), most were tired of seeing ads all over, and their computer seemed to be the last place that they wanted to see any more.

Careers

One other area that was a slight surprise was the Career area—basically a classified jobs section. Some people were bored with it, didn't want to see it (14%). Others, such as people who work freelance, were thankful for it (86%). Definitely a keeper.

> "I have my own business, and the Career section seemed like it might be a place I will check often."

> "I've been in the same job for 20 years and don't really have a use for the

Career area."

Miscellaneous Comments

A few miscellaneous comments left by the users...

"There is a lot of teaching and learning going on in here!"

"I am interested in the news (international to local) in a concise form. I have other bulletin boards for chatting and specific interests. The one that I must include is the food section and eating out. I too would like the weather. Pictures and graphics are not of interest to me. I categorize that aspect of computing with bells and whistles. Cute but not real important. Whether I say aboard depending totally on cost. Have I missed seining that info somewhere? Thanks again!"

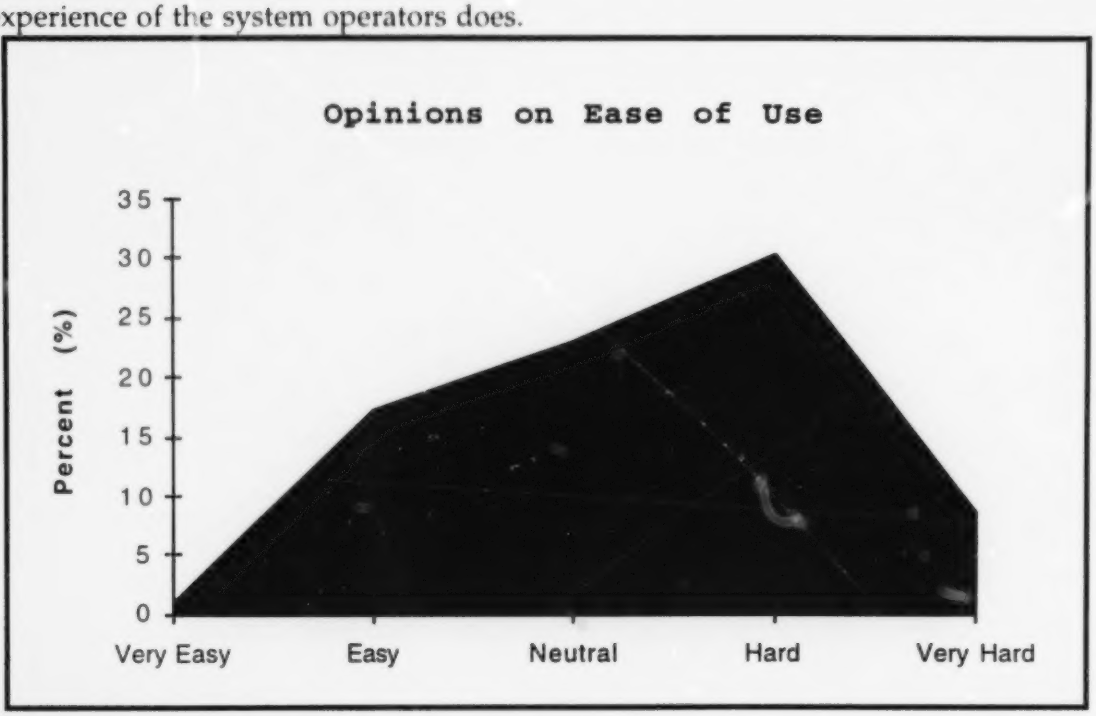
"I enjoy using this $2000 machine for something!"

"Help I cannot continue! I do not know what to do next... The only thing I can do now is to hang up my modem, sorry....... NO CARRIER."

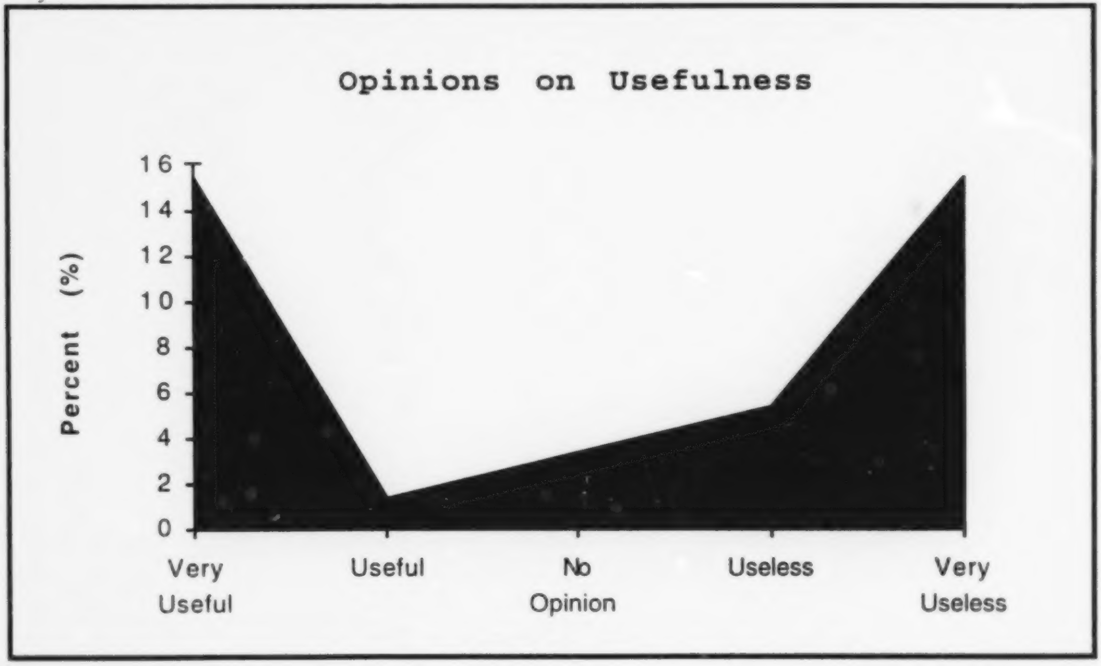
It should be understood that the fact that users might not have liked a particular area of *Courier On-Line,* it doesn't necessarily lower their approval of the board in general. Most of the users realize that if they aren't pleased with or don't like a section, they don't have to use it. During the test phase, when the BBS was free, that was a satisfactory option.

Ease of Use and Usefulness

One area that could use improvement is the ease of use of the board. Most users are used to a more fluid interface. This is expected on a board of this age. Ease will increase as the experience of the system operators does.



Usefulness is a term and value that changes over time. Nobody thought microwave ovens or, for that matter, even computers were useful until they owned one for a time, and learned what they could do for them. Of those responding to our question, the majority seemed to fall at one of the two extremes.



Discussion and Conclusions

Additional Discoveries

In addition to the qualitative and quantitative data summarized in the previous section, the process of performing this research study uncovered a number of just as important—if somewhat less tangible—findings. It was discovered (during an initial attempt to obtain a random sample of computer/modem owners) that the *average* computer/modem owner should *not* be the target of a newspaper-run BBS. The majority of those individuals are not yet prepared to use a BBS at a level that could support such a service. On the other hand, it was found that there appears to be a large core group of knowledgeable computer users (or those excited enough to learn) that *should* be the target of this type of service. Although they are excited by email, games, chat, etc., these services must distinguish themselves from other boards by providing what mainstream media do best and that the other boards cannot provide—local news and community information.

It was also discovered that running a service like *Courier On-Line* is a daunting task to say the least—and cannot be reasonably done by people as a secondary or tertiary task for an existing media outlet. While nearly everyone at a newspaper or local broadcaster—writers, computer operators, graphic designers and advertisers—must play a role in such a service, it seems reasonable to expect that more people (not less) will have to be hired to fulfill the many tasks of running multiple communication services. Consequently, these services will eventually have to be self-supporting—probably through the use of some form of advertising and a subscription fee.

Toward a Theoretical Understanding of BBS Usage

It is extremely important that industry and academic professionals know how and why people would use a computer bulletin board service. However, the research in this area lags the still relatively new industry trend of going on-line. As a result, there is no definitive set of data or past research that can be expected to coalesce into concise theoretical statements about usage of BBSs—and how such usage will affect the local media mix of the future.

The uses and gratifications (U&G) paradigm seems well suited to the study of this emerging communication channel. The seminal definition of uses and gratifications research has been "the social and psychological origins of needs, which generate expectations of the mass media or other sources that lead to differential patterns of media exposure (or engagement in other activities), resulting in need gratifications and other consequences, perhaps mostly unintended ones."[13] Palmgreen and Rayburn (1985) have built upon that in discussing the expectancy-value model of media usage. They have suggested that media usage is based on user expectations that the medium (in this case a BBS) has something that the user believes is of value to them. Specific gratifications are sought, and if not met satisfactorily, users move on to other channels to fulfill their need.[14]

Uses and gratifications theory has long been used to study television use, but although it is well suited for the study of new technology usage, seldom has this been done.[15] With the increased alternatives to existing media, reasons for new media usage and the likely success of their adoption by the public seem appropriate to study using the U&G method. How do these new technologies, if accepted, affect paths selected to achieve gratifications and do the gratifications themselves change?

A variety of U&G studies of new technology use performed in the late 1970s and early 1980s were reviewed by Williams, Friedman Phillips and Lum (1985).[16] They noted that interactive services (such as the "Qube" cable experiment and early teletext and videotext) were not nearly as popular as originally hoped. Research has noted that gratifications obtained by these users include convenience, surveillance and transaction. However, although these technologies may provide convenience, the loss of interpersonal interaction was often seen as a strong negative by some. This loss may not occur in the newer media of computer bulletin board services. In their review of prior research, the Williams et al. noted that people are becoming quite attracted to the "socio-emotional" use of computers in teleconferencing (commonly know today as "chat" mode) and electronic mail. Emotional/social uses of email might even be a stronger motivation for usage than task accomplishment.

Williams et al. (1985) pointed out that U&G research must expand its focus to look at the new gratifications that may be generated by using these communication forms. Gratifications such as those of audience as direct participant and users as truly active.[17]

As various forms of computer-mediated-communication become standard avenues of "mass" and "interpersonal" communication, researchers will bombard these new technological systems from a variety of research perspectives. While each perspective is likely to provide a valuable and unique look at this new communication channel, the uses and gratifications approach appears to be a most appropriate method to study CMC—a medium in which the audience is active by definition.

A Final Word

The qualitative and quantitative data clearly show that a media-owned BBS like Courier *On-Line* is something that can survive even in a moderate-sized community. The service under study was proclaimed a success, by the most important critics of all, the people who used it. Success never continues without growth, and growth is the most important factor for the continued success of *COL* and related services. As more and more people join, the opinions and suggestions will become more directed. A crucial difference between BBSs and traditional local media is the availability for immediate feedback. Instead of the one to many model of communication, BBSs provide a many to many model—creating a medium with a vastly different character from that which the parent company and its employees are used to. Success with this newer medium will require a rethinking of the audience-media interaction by all concerned (including researchers).

Local media outlets are faced with a dilemma. Most realize that in the near future, their markets will be able to support a "mainstream," media-owned regional bulletin board service. The user base may be so small that only one such service might survive in a given market. In cities where boards have survived, system adoption rates were found to be directly related to user participation levels.[18] So, if a local media outlet envisions itself as the future provider of community news via BBS, that company should be laying the ground work now.

Notes

1. **T-Leaves.** Newspaper Association of America, October, 1993; *Surge of Electronic Newspapers.* **U.S. News & World Report**, May 16, 1994, p. 60.

2. J. Garvey, *Personal telephone coversation and FAX*, May 18, 1994. (Garvey is the managing editor of **Newsday Online**).

3. *Nationwide survey finds 11 million US homes already equipped to travel the information highway.* **Associated Press Business Wire Features**, May 23, 1994.

4. B. M. Macaraeg, *A private little board.* **PC Magazine**, March 15, 1994, p. 122.

5. E. Baig, *So you want to be chairman of the (bulletin) board?* **Business Week**, November 22, 1993, p. 141.

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ANTI-SUFFRAGE PRESS AND PROPAGANDA OF THE LIQUOR AND BREWING INDUSTRIES: WISCONSIN, 1910-20

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ANTI-SUFFRAGE PRESS AND PROPAGANDA OF THE LIQUOR AND BREWING INDUSTRIES: WISCONSIN, 1910-20

The liquor and brewing industries were staunch opponents of woman suffrage, which they believed would bring prohibition, and used their propaganda and publicity machines in their attempt to prevent the reform. This paper examines the development of the liquor and brewing publicity machine, specifically during the last decade of the suffrage movement. It particularly focuses on anti-suffrage campaigns in Wisconsin, which are well-documented in the records of the suffage organizations of that state. This study analyses in particular four publications: The Progress and Reflector, Bonfort's Wine and Spirits Circular, the Western Brewer and the USBA Yearbook. It finds that anti-suffrage propaganda might have delayed the reform in the short-run but eventually created a backlash and may even have contributed to the arrival of nationwide prohibition in 1918.

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ANTI-SUFFRAGE PRESS AND PROPAGANDA OF THE LIQUOR AND BREWING INDUSTRIES: WISCONSIN, 1910-20

During the long campaign for woman suffrage the most powerful and well-organized of its opponents were the liquor and brewing industries. While opposition to the reform was certainly found in other industries, where leaders feared suffrage would eventually force legislation for better pay and working conditions for women and children, the liquor and brewing industries were especially driven by the fear that women's votes would affect them directly, negatively, and immediately -- that is by bringing about prohibition.[1]

This fear seemed to be well founded in the fact that the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), the country's largest women's organization, had in 1879 endorsed suffrage as a means of creating and enforcing liquor controls and prohibition. It was further reinforced by suffrage arguments that the woman's vote would clean up society's evils such as "the wicked saloon" and "demon rum." A final confirmation seemed to come in 1915 when the powerful Anti-Saloon League (ASL) allied itself with the suffrage movement in its relentless push for prohibition. It seemed that the woman's vote would be a sure harbinger of the extinction of the liquor trade.[2]

The liquor and brewing industries responded to the threat of woman suffrage by setting up fairly sophisticated and well-organized lobbying and direct-action campaigns whenever a suffrage campaign appeared strong enough to succeed. Suffragists early on identified this opposition, and found evidence in Oregon, California, and Idaho that the industry was pouring money into these states to bribe legislators, dominate the newspapers, and turn out anti-suffrage voters. The stronger the suffrage campaign, in fact, the stronger the opposition, especially in those cases in which temperance and prohibition groups such as the WCTU became involved. Realizing that support from the WCTU was in some cases more a hindrance than a help, suffragists had begun by the 1890s to attempt to disassociate themselves from the temperance and prohibition movements.[3]

The liquor and brewing industries often attempted to keep their role in anti-suffrage campaigns secret from the general public. Not only did they face legal action if caught in illegal tactics such as bribing legislators and voters, but by the end of 1910, they were clearly aware of the negative public opinion such action could arouse. By 1914, after women had gained suffrage in twelve states, they could not afford to alienate this unpredictable new voting bloc by openly declaring their opposition in the remaining non-suffrage states. Although anti-suffrage campaigns continued to be high on the agenda of privately held meetings, representatives of the brewing and liquor industries officially disclaimed any such opposition.[4]

The Brewing and Liquor Industries

By 1905, brewing and distilling were the sixth largest industry in the United States, with a capital investment of more than $515 million. By 1911, distilleries produced 134.4 million gallons of distilled spirits per year and breweries and wineries produced nearly two *billion* gallons of wine and beer. In that year, the country's 1,524 brewers paid more than $63 million in federal and state taxes, while distillers contributed another $143 million to the nation's coffers. Between them, these two industries provided business for more than 256,000 retail and wholesale dealers nationwide.[5]

The industries' prominence was reflected in Wisconsin, where in 1910 brewing was the state's fifth largest industry, valued at $32 million. The state's 146 breweries produced more than 163 million gallons of beer a year and employed more than 6,000 workers and managers. The state also had two distilleries which produced 2.3 million gallons of distilled spirits each year. These breweries and the state's two distilleries in addition provided work for 748 wholesale dealers and 11,947 retail dealers. In Milwaukee alone, there were nine major breweries employing more than 3,000 workers and 2,618 licensed saloons.[6]

Industry Organization

These industries were represented by a number of trade organizations on both the national and state levels, the most powerful of which was the United States Brewers Association (USBA). Based in New York, the USBA convened annually for the general purpose of discussing the latest trends in the industry and promoting the beer business in general, issues which were then duly reported in annual publication, The USBA Yearbook. The real business of the association, however, was conducted behind closed doors at meetings of its board of trustees and committees. It was here that publicity and marketing strategies were devised and where political questions such as prohibition and suffrage were discussed.[7] The USBA had active associations in most of the states. Wisconsin, for example, represented one of the largest state associations, with 137 of its 147 breweries represented in five regional associations.[8]

Distillers also organized and were represented by the National Model License League, established in 1908. Like the USBA, the NMLL attempted to clean up the liquor trade by regulation and licensing, but frequently attacked the saloon, where most beer was sold and consumed, as responsible for the "liquor problem." One of the NMLL's most successful strategies was to set up "home rule" and "personal liberty" associations in local communities to protect the rights of the individual. Their basic argument was that prohibition imposed by the state or federal government was an infringement upon the individual liberties of both of the businessman and the ordinary citizen.[9]

Finally, beer and liquor dealers organized in two national associations with numerous state chapters. The National Retail Liquor Dealers Association (NRLDA) organized in 1893 and the National Wholesale Liquor Dealers

Association (NWLDA) organized in 1896. This last organization created a "protective" bureau in 1902 to educate the public about the evils of prohibition and poured out a phenomenal amount of anti-prohibition literature. In 1915, for example, it produced 2.5 million pieces of campaign literature distributed directly to voters, 760,000 clip sheets to newspapers, 412,000 copies of its flyer, The Other Side, and 31,000 copies of its monthly publication, the National Bulletin, which went to members of the industry and the association. In the same year, the NWLDA claimed to represent more than 1.1 million distillers, dealers and employees engaged in the liquor business and related industries.[10]

In Wisconsin, the state chapter of the NRLDA which was based in Milwaukee, represented some 11,000 saloon keepers and published a monthly bulletin, Progress and the Reflector. The Wisconsin chapter of the NWLDA claimed more than 700 members.[11]

Anti-suffrage Propaganda in Wisconsin

In Wisconsin, the brewing and liquor industries had good reason to fear suffrage, for the issue had been simmering ever since the 1870s and seemed to reach a crucial point in 1911 when the legislature passed a suffrage bill to go up for a popular referendum. One individual who documented his alarm was H.A. Schmidt, the secretary of the Eastern Wisconsin Brewers Association and treasurer and secretary for the George Walter Brewing Company in Appleton. Every year in his annual report to the stockholders Schmidt offered a rundown of the prohibition situation and by 1907 seemed to fear its inevitability. He often addressed the general political climate in these reports and in 1912 noted the passage of a suffrage bill that would come up in a general referendum the following year:

> Political conditions were generally satisfactory [in 1911], excepting the referendum law passed, which submits the question of women's suffrage to the voters this year. Of all questions heretofore submitted, this is without a doubt the most dangerous, and the most important. Political tricksters are continually resorting to schemes, fads, and fancies to corral votes to further their designs for the aggrandizement of political power. It behooves us to use every legitimate means to defeat this scheme, and thus confine political conditions to their present status, which is surely sufficiently disturbed and uncertain.[12]

Schmidt's views probably represented those of many brewers, although not all were ready to put them on record. In fact, while industry officials

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were open about their opposition to prohibition and liquor restrictions, they rarely officially admitted their opposition to suffrage and even claimed, on occasion, to be pro-suffrage. During the 1911-1912 campaign in Wisconsin, for example, when a suffrage organizer tried to get a measure of the opposition suffragists might be facing, she was told, in essence, not to worry. "Mr. (Gustav) Pabst assured me that the Pabst Brewing Company had absolutely no intention of working against woman suffrage and that he was practically sure that the same could be said of the other big brewing companies," she wrote a colleague in March 1911. She had also contacted Hugh Fox, the powerful secretary of the USBA in New York, she said, and he had told her he would be willing to give her a statement that "the Wisconsin State Brewer's Association positively would not carry on any opposition to the woman suffrage campaign."[13]

This professed neutrality was taken a step further in October 1911, when the president of the Wisconsin Retail Liquor Dealer's Protective Association issued a statement in which he somewhat surprisingly declared the association in favor of suffrage. John F. Langan announced that the state's saloon-keepers "would not oppose enactment of the pending statute" and that moreover, they favored the change. "The idea that saloon men are opposed to women having the right to vote is all wrong," Langan stated. "We are willing to risk a re-status in the State of Wisconsin with the women at the polls."[14] Langan's announcement was apparently motivated in part by the ongoing power struggle between the saloon-keepers and the state's brewers who had for the last six years been cutting back on the number of saloons in the state and controlling their operations in an attempt to mollify prohibitionists.[15] Thus, he continued in a vein typical of the disunity and infighting within the liquor camp and that afforded him the opportunity to take a swipe at the brewers:

> "Most of the women of Wisconsin are favorable to the regulation of saloons, and we stand right with them. We feel that if women vote the chances of the saloon man receiving a fair deal from the people and from the brewers will be better. Brewers in some way seem to be able to control legislation and the saloon man is not considered save as a money producer for the brewer. This agency will not send any agents into the field to fight woman suffrage, and there will be no slush funds among the saloon men to keep the women from the ballot. [Emphasis added.]"[16]

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But while these representatives of the industry professed neutrality, the suffragists had evidence that proved otherwise. "The brewers are putting up a great fight against us, and we need everyone of our friends here at this time," suffragist Ada James wrote a Republican assemblyman while the referendum bill was being debated in the legislature in late April 1911. "The brewers are after us," she wrote another. "I have a copy of a letter which they wrote to their lobbyists here and they are using it to the best advantage...." Suffragists continued to charge the brewers were against them throughout the campaign. When during the winter of 1912 the RLDA began issuing anti-suffrage fliers and pamphlets, it became obvious that despite Langan's earlier "endorsement," there would be only opposition from the saloon-keepers.[17]

This opposition began to take the form of anonymous anti-suffrage propaganda in the winter of 1912 and the suffragists hired an attorney to investigate the source of the material. They learned that the material was being paid for by William H. Austin, a lobbyist for the Wisconsin Brewers Association. Austin, who was also secretary of two of the state's five regional brewers' associations, was said to be the most powerful man in the state with a large measure of control over what was passed or defeated by the legislature. Austin was a key figure in the defeat of suffrage bills in both 1913 and 1915 and suffragist Jessie Hooper later reported that the lieutenant-governor told her he had seen Austin "sit in the gallery of the Senate and tell his men with his hands how to vote."[18]

When suffrage legislation was defeated, suffrage and prohibition publications often attributed the defeat to the brewing and liquor industries. These charges entered general debate, were published by the general circulation press, and often reached national publications, where prominent representatives of the industry issued disclaimers.[19] An editorial in the Saturday Evening Post attributing suffrage defeats in Wisconsin and Michigan in 1912 to the brewers, for example, provoked a response from Jacob Rupert, Jr., the president of the USBA. "The United States Brewers'

Association... has taken no part in this matter," Rupert responded in a letter to the Post that was later published in the USBA Yearbook. "Our Association has studiously refrained from taking a position on this matter [woman suffrage], both because it is not within its province, and also because its own members are divided in their personal opinions regarding it, just as they are about other political questions." Rupert went on to suggest that far from coming from the brewers, opposition to the Wisconsin referendum had come from a "combination of racial, religious and other prejudices." In Michigan, the wets had hardly opposed it, he argued, for in that state, "most of the wet counties voted in favor of it."[20]

But while representatives of the brewing and liquor industries were making these public denials and assuring suffragists they meant them no harm, their own records, which came under scrutiny in a series of investigations from 1914 to 1919, showed they had a very different agenda.[21] In 1913, for example, Oscar Schmidt of Milwaukee, the USBA representative for the Wisconsin and Nebraska territories, reported to the USBA board of trustees that the brewers had been active in their opposition to suffrage in those states. "We had the usual bills like every other state -- county option, woman suffrage in about six different forms, and we had everything else, which were all defeated," he told the board. "I say that can be done only by organization and by active work of the brewers being on the job all the time and not leaving it to someone else."[22]

In 1914, USBA Secretary Hugh Fox, who in 1912 and 1913 had published denials to suffrage charges that the USBA backed anti-suffrage organizations, arranged a contact between brewers and an anti-suffrage organization. In reply to a request from the Fred Miller Brewing Company in Milwaukee for information on organizing opposition to suffrage in the coming spring elections in Illinois, he made a guarded response. "In regard to the matter of woman suffrage, we are trying to keep from having any connection with it whatever," he wrote. "We are, however in a position to establish channels of communication with the leaders of the Anti-Suffrage movement for our friends in any state where suffrage is an issue." He went on to explain that the RLDA was behind a "new and active anti-suffrage association," but cautioned "I consider it most dangerous to have the retailers identified or active in any way in this fight, as it will be used against us everywhere."[23]

Organization of Brewing Propaganda

Contrary to the public disclaimers of any involvement in anti-suffrage campaigns, this evidence of liquor industry support is neither random nor unusual. It is, in fact, evidence of a well-planned campaign by the brewers to stop any legislation or candidate that threatened the brewing industry. This campaign had been launched by the USBA in 1908 under the direction of Fox, just after he became association secretary. Under his direction, the USBA geared up for an intensive and all-encompassing anti-prohibition course of action that included a wide range of political field work, lobbying tactics, counter-legislation, and propaganda, publicity, and press campaigns. While the organizational committee was responsible for coordinating and funding the activities of field workers like Schmidt, the publicity committee under Fox was responsible for creating a favorable public opinion that had the goal of turning back the prohibition tide.[24]

To accomplish this, Fox identified three major areas: gathering and collecting information; preparing material to disseminate to the public, and enlisting the cooperation of the media in disseminating it. In order to gather information, he started a clipping service, and called on members throughout the country to send him any newspaper or magazine articles concerning the industry. He established a library in the New York headquarters to store the information gathered so that it would be available to a regular staff of writers who then produced a constant stream of literature and propaganda in the form of articles, letters-to-the-editor, editorials, pamphlets, and books. In 1915 alone, the publication committee produced more than 11.6 million pieces of literature.[25]

In addition, Fox put on retainer two experts, a former U.S. government statistician, John Koren, and scientist D.E. Williams, to "furnish statistical advice," and "translate" scientific data into readable form for the general public. Williams and Koren also produced reports and scientific and medical articles that presented beer in the best light possible. In 1915, the publication committee was able to report that in the last year a "large number of articles... which have either been suggested by us or have been based on our investigations" had been published in leading newspapers and magazines, including the *Survey*, *Outlook*, the *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, and the *National Municipal Review*. The committee had even succeeded in getting articles and editorials in medical journals such as the *Medical Record*, the *Journal of the Medical Association*, and the *British Journal of Inebriety*. Most of these articles excluded the information that they had been written by agents of the brewing industry. In an article by John Koren that appeared in *Atlantic Monthly* in 1916, in fact, the author was identified as a "former U.S. Government statistician."[26]

Although the USBA disseminated books and pamphlets through its state associations and the wholesale and retail dealers, publishing brewery propaganda in reputable newspapers and magazines was a bit more of a problem. Here Fox developed a variety of techniques that, while commonplace to a modern-day publicity agent, were innovative in his time. First, he created a mailing list with the names of the more influential newspapers and periodicals and was able to report to his board of directors that three thousand were receiving his material. The committee intended to keep these publications "constantly informed of new developments of public interest," he explained, so as to gradually their confidence "with the result of securing a larger measure of helpful publicity." In this, he could already announce partial success, he claimed, for he could already "trace a marked difference in the tone of the thoughtful newspapers with regard to our business."[27]

Fox also designed a campaign to win press sympathy by increasing publications' financial stake in the wellbeing of the brewing industry. "There are a number of reputable magazines, and a good many daily papers which can be favorably impressed through their advertising columns, and to a smaller extent, through their subscription lists," he advised members at a general meeting later in 1909. He suggested that when members subscribed to their local newspapers, they should identify themselves as members of brewers associations or companies. And as business organizations they should adopt a liberal advertising policy. This, he believed, would create a positive attitude in the minds of the publishers that might easily seep into the news and editorial columns.[28]

The Wisconsin brewers evidently took this advice to heart, for in 1914, WBA secretary William Austin reported to Fox that the state's large breweries had launched an advertising campaign in 100 German-language and English-language weeklies, papers that usually did not attract advertising from the larger companies. After some months of the ad campaign, the editors of these smaller papers had become considerably "friendlier" toward the industry in general, he reported. "This all leads to the conclusion: Cultivate your local editor," Fox told his directors in his report of the campaign. "It may be in some cases distasteful, but it will pay you good dividends."[29]

Liberal advertising dollars might sweeten newspaper publishers' attitudes toward the brewing industry, but that did not mean they were always willing to print the articles the brewers' publicity agents submitted. Sometimes, in fact, newspapers and periodicals just had no room for brewery propaganda -- except at a price. In this case, the brewers paid for space where they could publish their columns and editorials and began to offer to do so on a regular basis.[30]

Brewers also succeeded in publishing material through the plate or "patent insides" services provided by a number of companies, the largest of these being the Western Newspaper Union and the American Press Association.[31] Fox had first discovered the convenience of plate services in 1910 and reported enthusiastically on it to the USBA board:

> Investigation has convinced me that the American Press Association is probably the most powerful agency for influencing public opinion in the United States... The Association supplies stereotype plates, notices, and news matter to eleven thousand newspapers in the United States and Canada. These newspapers are small daily, bi-weekly, or weekly newspapers which lack the resources to supply a news service of their own. Consequentially, they use whatever is sent them... and it has an immense effect in influencing the opinion of the people in the small towns

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> and rural districts... My inquiries... have confirmed that belief and have made me realize the vast influence exerted throughout the United States by such methods. I found that the American Press Association is doubtless the most effective, although the least known, agency in this respect.[32]

In 1913, Fox turned over much of the USBA publicity work to Percy Andreae, a former brewer and political agent for the Ohio Brewers' Association. Andreae set up a propaganda machine under the benign name of the National Association of Commerce and Labor to propagandize respectable classes of people and church organizations that might otherwise recoil from becoming involved in organizations using the words "liquor" or "brewer" in their names. While the purpose of the NACL was to combat prohibition and anything or anyone that might bring it about, it adopted the slogan of "Personal Liberty," which was more palatable to the people it hoped to influence.[33]

Andreae proved as versatile as Fox in his attempts to influence public opinion covertly. In a complicated scheme to reach the foreign-language press, he subsidized Louis Hammerling, president of the American Association of Foreign-Language Newspapers and editor of a semi-monthly magazine, The American Leader. For an annual sum of about $25,000, Hammerling would first publish articles written by Andreae under his own name in English in the Leader, then translate them into twenty-seven different languages, and finally distribute them as his own work to the 560 newspapers in the association.[34]

Andreae also attempted to solidify anti-prohibition support in the German-American community through the National German-American Alliance. Through a cooperative and financial arrangement reached with the Alliance in 1913, Andreae turned USBA fieldworkers like Schmidt over to the Alliance in specific states. Here they operated under the auspices of the Alliance to round up the German vote through the various affiliated societies. In this endeavor, Andreae obtained the ready cooperation of Alliance president C. J. Hexamer. When Andreae wrote Hexamer in December 1913 asking him to issue a general call to local alliances to announce their opposition to the passage of the Hobson prohibitory resolution in Congress, for example, Hexamer responded within the week that a letter had gone not only to the state and local alliances, but also to seven hundred German-language newspapers.[35]

USBA propaganda and political activity carried out through Andreae's arrangement with the German-American Alliance was not limited only to prohibitory legislation, but also included suffrage legislation. Propaganda intended for this audience, in fact, was usually designed to appeal specifically to German-American voters. Thus, in Detroit in 1913, Carl Bauer of the Michigan Staatsverband reported to the USBA that he had sent a letter to members warning them to vote against a woman suffrage amendment on the grounds that by its wording it would give the vote only to American-born women and would create discrimination against women of German birth. Some years later, the Nebraska Alliance sent its members letters asking them to vote against suffrage because "our German women do not want the right to vote, and since our opponents desire the right of suffrage mainly for the purpose of saddling the yoke of prohibition on our necks we should oppose it with all our might.[36]

Finally, the USBA attempted to gain control over a number of general circulation newspapers by subsidizing their publishers and editors. These included the New York Mail, the Montgomery (Alabama) Advertiser, purchased in 1915, the Newark (New Jersey) Morning Ledger, purchased in 1917, and the Washington Times, purchased in June 1917 by Hearst editor and anti-prohibitionist Arthur Brisbane. In each case, no-collateral, no-interest loans for the purchase of the newspapers were provided by the USBA through a network of holding companies and investors, none of which appeared on the face of it to have any connection with the brewers. After the financing for these newspapers came to light in the course of Senate investigations in 1917 and 1919, the newspapers' publishers claimed they had not known their financial backing originated with the brewers.[37]

Brewing and Liquor Industry Publications

Finally, the brewing and liquor industries each had their trade journals through which they addressed not only the latest technological and economic trends and developments in the industry, but also the political developments that affected it. Each industry had its own national publications while the various state leagues and associations also had their own. Those to be discussed here are: Progress and the Reflector, published by the Wisconsin RLDA; Bonfort's Wine and Spirits Circular, the official organ of the NWLDA; the Western Brewer, published in Chicago, and the USBA Yearbook, published annually by the USBA in New York. Prohibition was the political issue that naturally occupied the attention of these journals most of the time; woman suffrage was almost the only other political issue they consistently addressed. While comment on prohibition was often heated and emotional, articles on suffrage in the majority of these journals tended to be cool and detached.[18]

The Progress and the Reflector of the Wisconsin RLDA was an exception to this general rule of editorial distance on the suffrage question. The Progress began publication in Watertown during the 1911-1912 suffrage referendum campaign and came out against suffrage with a vengeance. Describing itself as "A ~~Journal~~ Journal Devoted to the Interests of Every Department of the Liquor Trade," and "An Educational Journal Covering Every Phase of the Retail and Wholesale Liquor and Brewing Industries," Progress nonetheless devoted most of its contents to convincing men to vote against the referendum. "For months preceding the election it was filled with objections, innuendo and abuse in prose, verse and pictures, all designed to impress the reader with the absurdity and danger of giving the vote to women," suffragist Theodora Youmans later wrote in her history of suffrage in Wisconsin. "It appealed to farmers and to every class of people connected in any way with the manufacture and sale of beer, saying in headlines: 'Give the Ballot to Women and Industry Goes Smash.'"[19]

The editors of Progress had no doubt suffrage would be the ruination of the industry. The cover of the August 1912 edition, for example, carried the memorable headline noted by Youmans. The subhead continued "Suffragette Movement in Wisconsin Threatens Various Industries -- Not Wanted by Majority of Women but Forced into it -- Means Prohibition and Loss of Vast Sums to Manufacturer, Dealer, and Workingman." In another article of the same edition, Progress announced its intention to wage an unremitting "campaign against woman suffrage and other dangers of the brewing and affiliated industries that threatens the trade... from now until the fall election."[40]

In the November 1912 issue, the eye-catching cover shows a stylishly dressed woman holding a shotgun to the head of a man on his knees in front of her. "Do I get the Vote?" she is asking the man, who is clasping his hands in a prayerful attitude. After the defeat of the referendum, an editorial boasted of the publication's role in the outcome of the election, but warned saloon men to redouble their efforts to keep suffrage out of Wisconsin, for just as the suffragists were planning to start their next campaign immediately so must their opponents. In response to the suffragists' protests over the language and general tone of the publication, the Progress agreed that while it might have used "offensive methods in its warfare... It should be understood that what Progress did was for the benefit of its trade -- it was educational -- nothing more." In July 1913, after the legislature had passed a second referendum bill only to have Governor Francis E. McGovern veto it, the Progress claimed the responsibility for this victory also. In this issue it improved its tone somewhat by publishing in full a prize-winning anti-suffrage essay that had first been published in the Woman's Protest by the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage.[41]

Shortly after this, Progress reported the annual address of Wisconsin RLDA president John Langan, who less than two years earlier had announced the association's short-lived endorsement of suffrage. In a complete reversal of his previous statement, Langan warned the members against suffrage, claiming it would promote prohibition. According to Progress, woman suffrage had been responsible for the towns that had gone dry in the April elections in Illinois and every Wisconsin liquor dealer should be on the alert to keep women's votes out of the state.[42]

The Progress and Reflector represented exactly the type of publication

Fox and Andreae deplored. It was blunt and tasteless and had no finesse at all. While it might have appealed to saloon keepers, its brash language and crude cartoons were guaranteed to offend the "better" class Andreae hoped to influence through his National Association of Commerce and Labor. Far more moderate was the style of Bonfort's Wine and Spirits Circular, which had been adopted by the NWLDA as its official organ. Published in New York as a semi-monthly, this journal served as a major news and advertising vehicle for the national liquor business. It kept watch on the suffrage movement and reported regularly on proposed suffrage campaigns and their outcomes. Unlike Progress, it did not use scare headlines or make dire predictions that the industry would "go smash," but considered the issue carefully and logically, and usually refrained from uttering opinions. When it did offer opinions, they were usually in the words of an official source -- an industry leader or a political figure.[43]

In 1910, for example, when suffrage passed in Washington, Bonfort's reaction was carefully measured. "Although the history of other States in which women have been granted the right to vote is not such as to cause undue apprehension on the part of liquor interests," it wrote, "it is believed there is now more chance of prohibition being adopted in Washington than formerly." In the next month's issue, however, the tone was more alarmed. "The women of the State of Washington, having won the right to vote, threaten to make that growing State prohibition -- or at least, some of them so threaten," it reported. In one town, for example, four hundred women had registered to vote in the spring elections, all with the avowed intention of electing prohibitionist officials. "All signs point to the conclusion that the trade in Washington, especially outside the large cities, is facing a serious crisis," the article concluded. Six months later, this prediction was partially fulfilled when Tacoma passed an anti-treating law. Women had the right to vote there, the article pointed out, and about 7,000 women out of a registered electorate of about 21,000 had exercised that right. The woman's vote had contributed to the passage of the law, the article suggested.[44]

In June 1911, when Bonfort's covered the annual convention of the WLDA, it included the address of Fred T. Linneman, president of the Wisconsin association. Linneman described the legislative means by which prohibitionists attempted to undermine the industry in his state. One of these was the woman suffrage referendum (later defeated in the 1912 election): "The suffragists were received and their bills introduced on the floor of our Assembly by one of the strongest opponents of the liquor business," he told the liquor dealers. "Thus we may readily see what we may expect from the women's suffrage movement." Not only would the reform cause trouble for the liquor dealers, he said, repeating one of the common anti-suffrage arguments, it also bode ill to women in general. "It is truly bad enough when a woman against her will, and perhaps under coercion, is obliged to leave her home duties to take part in political agitation away from the high and holy sphere which nature has allotted her." Not all was lost in Wisconsin, however, Linneman told the convention, for the liquor industry had powerful allies there. Among these Linneman counted the state's German press, which daily published articles on the "fallacies of prohibition" and "made county option impossible." "(T)hey are ever ready and reliable to assist when we call," he exuded. "All hail to the German Press of Wisconsin."[45]

Bonfort's often found itself in the position of defending the liquor industry against allegations that it had opposed suffrage. After the ASL and suffragists blamed the 1912 defeat in Ohio on the industry, for example, an article in Bonfort's argued that there was no connection between how people had voted on suffrage and how they had voted on license. Second, it argued, "The real truth is that suffrage killed itself." It had been the public's negative reaction to the violence of the British Suffragettes, who just ten days before the election had set afire a Dublin theater, that had caused defeat of the suffrage amendment, not any action on the part of the liquor industry, the article claimed. Finally, it concluded, the "very fact that the Anti-Saloon League espoused the suffrage cause in the State was in itself a handicap for the women."[46]

Shortly after statewide prohibition was defeated in 1912 in Colorado, a suffrage state, Bonfort's expressed the relief many in the liquor industry must have felt and quickly turned the election results to its advantage. Women had "voted like sensible men." The voting woman had used "common sense," and had "taken the stand that she wants the liquor and drinking in the saloon and not in her home... She wants her home protected from the insidious poison of 'bootlegging,' kitchen stills,' etc." Not only had women in Colorado *voted* against prohibition, the article continued, they had also *organized* against it, joining the Home Rule League where they had done "yeoman work" against statewide prohibition and for the model license.[47]

But this scenario of suffrage states voting against prohibition became the exception in the years to come. Bonfort's continued to monitor suffrage and the woman's vote and found fewer cases to celebrate and more cause for concern. In 1914, for example, it was able to report that California, a suffrage state, had defeated statewide prohibition, with a large percentage of the registered women voting against it. But four other suffrage states, Arizona, Oregon, Washington, and Colorado, had banned alcohol. "There must be a cause for the people voting away State revenues, and that cause should be ascertained," Bonfort's told its readers. "The time has arrived for all branches of the industry to get together and analyze the election returns in the States that have voted for Prohibition, ascertain the cause and apply the remedy. There is work for our trade to do and there is no time to lose."[48] The Hackensack (New Jersey) Record, quoted in Bonfort's shortly afterward, was more blunt in its conclusions. Three of the states to adopt prohibition in the 1914 election (Washington, Oregon, and Arizona), had adopted suffrage only within the last four years, the Record article pointed out.

> It looks almost as if the first thing the women of those States did, when they found political power in their hands, was to get to work getting rid of the "Demon Rum." This tendency on the part of woman voters has been anticipated for many years. It has been observed that in nearly every suffrage campaign the strongest opposition comes from the liquor men. Now their instinctive position is proved to have a logical basis... Other things being equal, woman suffrage will be expected to entail prohibition."[49]

In November 1915, there was a brief respite. After the defeat of

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prohibition in Ohio and of suffrage in New York, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania, Bonfort's predicted these defeats would "remove the doubts that existed" and that a business revival would follow quickly. By fall of 1916, however, things had turned around and Bonfort's was definitely worried. In an editorial appearing in September, it reminded its readers of the connection between suffrage and prohibition and advised them to "consider the question carefully before voting in favor of any such change." Especially important was the presidential election. Wilson's Republican opponent, Charles E. Hughes, Bonfort's warned, "is avowedly for equal suffrage by constitutional amendment. If equal suffrage means a shortcut to national Prohibition, then we think it is time for our trade to find out where it intends to cast its ballot and what for."[10]

What Bonfort's was to the liquor trade, the Western Brewer and the USBA Yearbook were to the brewing trade. The Western Brewer, established in Chicago in 1876, was a monthly that published material "on brewing, malting, and other subjects of interest to the trade" that frequently included comment on politics, prohibition, and suffrage. Like Bonfort's, the Western Brewer kept watch on suffrage campaigns and tried to predict how they might effect prohibition. Unlike Bonfort's however, it gave no evidence of the anxiety that publication frequently exhibited over the years. Once the woman suffrage states started adding up after 1910, in fact, it adopted a tone almost of encouragement to women voters to do the "right thing." As prohibition states began to add up, it began to stress the industry's position that beer was a "temperance" drink and that the brewing industry really should be in no danger of prohibition. It adopted the attitude that surely women voters would realize this and praised them whenever possible.[11]

After prohibition had been defeated in a number of cities in California during the 1911 elections, for example, the Western Brewer praised the women who had "wielded a powerful influence" in the Los Angeles elections. Despite predictions that women would support the prohibition bill and the fact that "they had been coached on the subject by prohibition leaders for weeks prior to the election," some women had formed a Women's Progressive League, it reported, and had rallied women voters to defeat the bill by almost two to one.[52] In 1912, after prohibition was defeated in Colorado, the publication used the occasion to show how those states with suffrage almost consistently refused "bone dry" measures. In the suffrage states, an editorial professed, women were more likely to be "influenced by intelligent arguments than men." Here in the pages of the Western Brewer, the brewers apparently had no intention of declaring their opposition to suffrage. On the contrary, they seemed to accept it as almost inevitable. Women would undoubtedly win the vote in a number of states "within a very few years," the editorial predicted, continuing:

> While we do not go on record as in favor of this proposition, we do not believe there is much to fear when it is established... We have always insisted that the making and selling of pure beer is as legitimate as any other commercial business in the world; that the business should be conducted along legitimate lines, and that when it is so conducted, no rational argument can come from men or women of an intelligent public.[53]

The Western Brewer stayed with this tone through the remaining years of the decade. When in 1914 Illinois voted for local option in some communities and analysts tried to figure out how the women's vote had influenced the results, the publication took on a patient tone. The women voters, like the men voters, had voted for and against the saloons and for and against the machine candidates for the Chicago Board of Alderman, it observed. "(A)ll the men were not on the side of vice, and all the women were not on the side of virtue." Although many suffragists insisted that once women had the ballot the evils of society would "rapidly disappear," they would not succeed overnight in accomplishing what men had been attempting "since the beginning." The millennium would not be hastened by women's votes and the case for suffrage rested "not on the assumed ability of the women to reform the world, but on the ability of the women to do what the men have been doing in government and to do it as well." [54]

Finally, the Western Brewer provides some evidence of the brewers' backup plan to bring women into the fold (if suffrage could not be stopped) by convincing them that beer was really a temperance drink. In an article reporting on a new USBA advertising campaign designed to "knock the props from under some of the theoretical and highly embellished arguments of the prohibitionists," it showed one of the ads addressed to women. The illustration shows two stylishly dressed women at a ballot box. "YOU WOMEN WHO VOTE -- and you women who expect to vote soon -- ought to know *both sides* of the prohibition question," the text announces. It goes on to explain that beer is a temperance drink and prohibiting it through total prohibition will only cause illegal and grave abuse.[55]

While the Western Brewer represented the business side of brewing, the organizational side was represented by the USBA Yearbook, which served as the national association's official organ. Here were published reports of the brewers' annual convention, with the full text of the most important speeches, the reports of the various committees and their year's work and statistical tables giving a variety of data on the industry. In addition, the Yearbook published articles on topics of interest and reviews of books and articles on similar topics that had appeared elsewhere. Once again, the focus of this publication was the brewing industry, but like the others discussed here, the Yearbook devoted an increasing amount of space to prohibition and occasional space to a story on women's votes. These articles on suffrage were carefully worded and gave no inkling whatsoever of the anti-suffrage campaigns being supported by the USBA, but in the years between 1910 and 1919 they did indicate the changing *public* attitude the association assumed vis a vis woman suffrage.[56]

In 1910, for example, the Yearbook reviewed an Atlantic Monthly article by Margaret Deland in which the author had examined the various characteristics of the "New Woman." The entire Yearbook article -- that is, its review as well as the excerpts from the original Deland article -- was flippant and amusing, and completely derogatory of women's ability to assume the responsibility of the vote. "Of the many obstacles in the path of rational temperance reform," the review began, "one of the most difficult to overcome is the unreasoning interference of women." It went on to quote

Deland who described women as naive and impetuous, and entirely without the "self-restraint" exercised by wiser and more experienced men. Rather than using the vote wisely, the New Woman was rushing to introduce reform (such as prohibition) for the sake of reform, without considering the consequences. "(T)he New Woman's intemperate temperance betrays her small honor for human nature; her small belief in time, but her very large confidence in her own judgement," Deland had written. She ended, as did the Yearbook review, by quoting a prominent Catholic cleric: "'Women never reason: or if they do, they either draw correct inferences from wrong premises, or wrong inferences from correct premises -- *and they always poke the fire from the top.*"[57]

This type of material was the closest the Yearbook ever came to editorial comment on suffrage during these years. In the next several years, in fact, the publication barely commented on the [illegible] ~~suffrage~~ at all, although it keep track of upcoming suffrage elections and their outcomes. In 1912, for example, under its column on Wisconsin, it reported simply that a "referendum granting equal suffrage" was to be voted on in November. In 1913, it reported the referendum had been defeated.[58]

This silence was perhaps a result of the storm of accusations the 1912 suffrage defeats in Wisconsin, Michigan, and Ohio had brought upon the brewers and liquor industry. The 1912 elections, in fact, may have been an important turning point in the USBA's policy regarding suffrage. Although there is no indication the USBA changed its political strategies and covert public opinion campaigns, it does appear that at about this time the organization made a conscious effort to disavow any connection to suffrage opposition. The Yearbook chronicled this change when it reported USBA president Jacob Rupert's response to a Saturday Evening Post editorial that had made specific charges against the brewers' role in the recent suffrage defeats. Rupert had denied the charges categorically in a letter to the editor.[59] At a Chicago brewers conference a month later, he used the incident to impress upon the membership the public position they should take regarding suffrage. After recounting the charges that had been made and reading his letter of response, he gave the brewers his opinion: "I do not believe (woman suffrage) is a subject with which we should concern ourselves as a trade. It is a political question and one in regard to which every man is entitled to his own individual opinion." Rupert's "hands-off" policy became the brewer's official position on suffrage for the remainder of the decade.[60]

The Failure of Liquor and Brewing Propaganda

It is ironic that the industries' anti-suffrage and anti-prohibition propaganda were in part responsible for their defeat in 1918. By adopting methods that, when they came to light, appeared underhanded, illegal, and even *un-American*, the industries made themselves vulnerable to attacks from both the prohibition and suffrage camps. In the hysterical atmosphere following the outbreak of war in Europe, this proved fatal. It was too easy for opponents to link the industries' activities to German and unpatriotic interests.

While the USBA readily admitted it had opposed prohibition, it maintained to the bitter end that it had never opposed suffrage. Even when U.S. Senate investigations in 1918 and 1919 revealed their covert activities during state prohibition and suffrage campaigns, the beleaguered brewers maintained they had done nothing wrong. As to the charges that the USBA had engaged in illegal political activities and attempted to control the press and influence public opinion through underhanded methods, the USBA insisted it had been taking necessary action to protect itself from fanatical prohibitionists.[61]

In its report on the investigation of the industry, the Senate subcommittee itemized thirteen points where it had discovered wrongdoing on the part of the brewers. These included: "furnishing large sums of money for the purpose of secretly controlling newspapers and periodicals;" engaging in activity to control primaries, elections, and political organizations; contributing financially to political campaigns and candidates; colluding to control the foreign-language press; boycotting "unfriendly" businesses and industries; and "contributing to the German-American Alliance, many of the membership of which were disloyal and unpatriotic."[62]

Of all these charges, the brewers ignored all but the last two, which it chose to answer in its 1919 Yearbook. Contributions to the German-American Alliance, it stated, had been made "solely in the belief that opposition to prohibition would be strengthened thereby" and had ceased long before the United States entered the war with Germany. As for boycotting unfriendly industries, the brewers were doing no more than the Anti-Saloon League and prohibitionists had done against the liquor and brewing industries. Finally, the Yearbook concluded, the charges contained in the Senate committee report were "obviously untrue, for if the brewers had violated the law of the land they would have been held to answer in the courts."[63]

But in 1919, the USBA was fighting a lost cause. On January 16 of that year, Nebraska had become the thirty-sixth state to approve the Eighteenth Amendment and nationwide prohibition was due to go into effect within the year.[64]

By the time the Prohibition Amendment was ratified, women in twenty-one states had the vote. Although it is unclear whether the prediction that woman suffrage would bring prohibition had come true, it is undeniable that the constant charges and exposures of the industry's opposition to suffrage over the years had not helped the brewers in their crusade to influence public opinion in their favor. It is also clear that proof and allegations of the brewers' opposition to suffrage became a weapon in the hands of both the prohibitionists and the suffragists. Finally, as Germany went to war first in Europe and then with the United States, both the prohibitionists and suffragists identified the brewer's connections to the German-American Alliance and their political activities as undemocratic, unpatriotic, and disloyal. "By playing upon the patriotism, the doubts and the prejudices of the population, and by utilizing every crisis to enforce their argument," the USBA Yearbook wrote in 1919, "[the professional prohibitionists] found a way to take toll, as it were, out of the very blood and agony of the world and to

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advance their cause exceedingly." Although the brewers realized what was happening they had been powerless to stop it.[65]

It is ironic that with all the money and energy spent on propaganda, the brewing and liquor industries were still not able to control the press and public opinion. Individual newspapers might have accepted the "paid" articles and editorials they supplied and hard-pressed country papers might have subscribed to the plate services that carried liquor propaganda, but by 1918, thousands of newspapers and magazines were refusing to carry liquor and beer ads and hundreds more were expressing their support of both prohibition and suffrage.[66]

As for the impact of trade journals and publications such as *Bonfort's* and the *Western Brewer*, they had little effect on the general public and seem to have failed in inspiring their membership to find a solution to the impending doom. As 1920 approached, all they could do was report the grim facts and wait for the lights to go out.

NOTES

1.The link between suffrage and prohibition and the opposition to suffrage by the liquor and brewing industries is discussed in great detail by suffrage organizers Carrie Chapman Catt and Nettie Rogers Schuler in Woman Suffrage and Politics: The Inner Story of the Suffrage Movement (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1923). It is also discussed in a number of more recent analyses: Ross Evans Paulson, Women's Suffrage and Prohibition (Glenville, Ill.: Scott Foresman and Co., 1973; Eleanor Flexner, Century of Struggle, rev. ed. (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1975) 186-89, 305-11; Steven M. Buechler, Women's Movements in the United States (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990) 185-86; William H. O'Neill, Everyone Was Brave: The Rise and Fall of Feminism in America (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1969) 62-63.

2.Peter H. Odegard, Pressure Politics: The Story of the Anti-Saloon League (New York: Columbia University Press, 1928); Flexner, 186-89.

3.Although suffrage was gradually adopted by individual states, it was not until 1920 that a national suffrage amendment went into effect. This was a year after national prohibition was adopted. Catt and Schuler, 270-72; Abigail Scott Duniway, Pathbreaking: An Autobiographical History of the Equal Suffrage Movement in Pacific Coast States (New York: Source Book Press, 1970), xiii-xiv, 100, 205.

4.In a strange contortion of logic, the industries even argued that they *supported* suffrage because women voters actually *opposed* prohibition and instead voted for regulation of the industry. See, for example, "Universal Suffrage vs. Prohibition," Bonfort's Wine and Spirit Circular, Nov. 25, 1912, p.78.

5.United States Brewers Association, United States Brewers Association Yearbook: 1911, (New York: The United States Brewers Association Publishers, 1911), Table I; USBA Yearbook: 1912, Table G, Table H.

6.USBA Yearbook: 1911, 331, Table H; Wisconsin Blue Book, 1915, (Madison: State of Wisconsin Publishing Company, 1915), 37, 44, 46; William Henry Burhop, "Statistical Study of the Liquor Business and its Effects in Wisconsin," (Unpublished Bachelor's thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1913), 5, v.

7."Outline to the Organization and Political and Other Activities of the United States Brewers' Association," box 69, Brewery Propaganda Papers, United States Senate, Senate Subcommittee on the Judiciary, 66A-F12, National Archives, Washington, D.C.; Kerr 27, 174; Flexner, 307. The business of these "secret" meetings will be discussed below.

8.USBA Yearbook: 1911, 308-09.

9.Kerr, 29, 164.

10.Kerr, 31; "Liquor Dealers' Publicity," Bonfort's Wine and Spirit Circular, May 18, 1916; "A Challenge to the Truth," American Issue, June 24, 1916; "To the Editor," Letter attached to "Serial No. 13," New York World Papers, box 1916 a, folder Birmingham, Ala. to prohibition, Butler Library, Rare Books and Manuscripts Collections, Columbia University, New York, New York.

11.USBA Yearbook: 1912, Table G. Progress and Reflector, November 1912.

12.H.A. Schmidt, "Annual Report to Stockholders of the George Walter Brewing Company," Jan. 9, 1912, George Walter Brewing Co. Papers, box 1, folder 4.

13.Crystal Eastman Benedict to Alice James Hall, March 11, 1911, James Papers, reel 1. At this time Pabst was president of the Pabst Brewing Co., an official in the Wisconsin Brewer's Association, and a vice president of the USBA. He later served as president of the USBA.

14."Saloon Men Hail Votes For Women," the Racine Times, Oct. 7, 1911.

15.In 1907, the Wisconsin Brewers' Association had publicly condemned disorderly and disreputable saloons and had offered to cooperate with local officials in eliminating them through vigilance committees. By 1910, what became known among brewers as the "Wisconsin Idea" had resulted in shutting down about 100 bars in Milwaukee alone. USBA Yearbook: 1910, 145; Cochran, 314.

16."Saloon Men Hail Votes For Women," Racine Times, Oct. 7, 1911.

17.James to Lawrence Grimsrudd, April 22, 1911, James Papers, reel 1; James to S.C. Goff, April 23, 1911, James Papers, reel 1. The RLDA published a monthly bulletin, The Progress and Reflector, which during this period devoted itself to opposing the suffrage campaign. Progress will be discussed below.

18."S.M. Marsh to James, Oct. 31, 1912, James papers, Box 17, folder 1; S.M. Marsh to James, Nov. 13, 1912, James Papers, box 17, folder 1; "The Governor's Veto," Wisconsin Citizen, June 1913; "Liquor Lobby Leaves Trail," Woman's Journal, July 17, 1915; Flexner, 308; USBA Yearbook: 1912, 277.

19.For examples of newspaper coverage on the state level, see, for example,"But a Start," Wisconsin State Journal, Nov. 7, 1912; "Election Tricks in Wisconsin," Woman's Journal, Nov 16, 1912; "Wisconsin," the American Issue, Aug. 14, 1915.

20.USBA Yearbook: 1913, 245-46.

21.The industry was investigated in Pennsylvania in 1914 and in Texas in 1916. In 1918 and 1919, it came under investigation by a Senate subcommittee for its involvement with the German-American Alliance and possible subversive activities during the conflict with Germany. The investigations are described briefly in Odegard, 249-265. The reports and documents of the hearings are contained in the following sources: United States Senate, Senate Subcommittee on the Judiciary, 66A-F12, box 69, Brewery Propaganda Papers, National Archives, Washington, D.C.; U.S. Senate Subcommittee of the Committee of the Judiciary, Brewing and Liquor Interests and German and Bolshevik Propaganda, Report and Hearings, 1919, Senate Document no. 62, 66 Cong., I sess. v 1-3. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1919); U.S. Senate Subcommittee of the Committee of the Judiciary, National German-American Alliance, Hearings on S.3529, A Bill To Repeal The Act Entitled "An Act To Incorporate The National German-American Alliance," Approved February 25, 1907, 65 Cong., II sess. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1918).

22.U.S. Senate Subcommittee of the Committee of the Judiciary, Brewing and Liquor Interests and German and Bolshevik Propaganda, Report and Hearings, 1919, Senate Document no. 62, 66 Cong., I sess., vol 1, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1919), 1170.

23.Brewing and Liquor Interests, 1032. In 1913 Fox issued a statement denying the USBA had ever endorsed or funded anti-suffrage organizations. His statement was reprinted in a pamphlet distributed in 1915 by the Pennsylvania Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage."Woman Suffrage and the Liquor Question," pamphlet circa 1915, Pennsylvania Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, New York State Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage Papers, folder 10, New York State Public Library, Manuscripts and Special Collections, Albany, N.Y..

24."Outline of the Organization and Political and Other Activities of the United State's Brewers' Association," Brewery Propaganda Papers, 4-6.

25."Outline of the Organization," Brewery Propaganda Papers, 7-8; *Brewing and Liquor Interests*, 58, 87.

26. *Brewing and Liquor Interests*, 62, 100-07; John Koren, "Government and Prohibition," *Atlantic Monthly*, April 1916, 526-27.

27.*Brewing and Liquor Interests*, 806.

28.*Brewing and Liquor Interests*, 794-95.

29.*Brewing and Liquor Interests*, 784-85.

30.*Brewing and Liquor Interests*, v-vi.

31.Social movement groups also found the plate services convenient for their publications. Both the Anti-Saloon League and the National American Woman Suffrage Association were using them by 1912. The Wisconsin suffragists considered using the Western Newspaper Union, but rejected the idea because they could not afford it. The New York State Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage started using the plate service of the American Press Association in 1916. Youmans to Benedict, June 10, 1912, James Papers, box 11, folder 1; Frances Benom, executive secretary NAOWS to Editor the "Star," Jan. 21, 1916, Anti-Suffrage Collection, New York State Public Library, box 1, folder 1.

32."Report on the American Press Association," *Brewing and Liquor Interests*, 780-81. Ironically Fox discovered the existence of the APA by studying boilerplate articles provided by the prohibition movement.

33."Outline of the Organization," 10, Brewery Propaganda Papers.

34."Outline of the Organization," 10-11, Brewery Propaganda Papers; *Brewing and Liquor Interests*, 475-76, 617-18.

35."Outline of the Organization," *Brewery Propaganda*, 12; *Brewing and Liquor Interests*, 839-96; U.S. Senate Subcommittee of the Committee of the Judiciary. *National German-American Alliance, Hearings on S.3529, A Bill To Repeal The Act Entitled "An Act To Incorporate The National German-American Alliance," Approved February 25, 1907*. 65 Cong., II sess., (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1918), 206-9; 221-22.

36. *National German-American Alliance, Hearings*, 640-41.

37.*Brewing and Liquor Interests*, 16-23, 47-49.

38.Other prominent publications were: *Mida's Criterion*, (Chicago Liberty League), the *National Forum* (Liquor Dealer's Protective League of Montana), the *Liberal Advocate* (Ohio Liquor League), the *National Herald* (Philadelphia Liquor League), *Malt* (New York brewers), and the *Brewers' Bulletin*, published in Chicago.

39.Suffrage and Liquor," The *Woman's Journal*, Sept. 20, 1913. Theodora Winton Youmans, "Wisconsin," in Ida Husted Harper, ed. *History of Woman Suffrage*. Vol 6 (New York: Arno and the New York Times, 1969), 703. Although *Progress* was widely cited by suffragists and the suffrage and prohibition press as well as the general press, no extant copies of the publication could be located for this project. All citations below are taken from reproductions or citations published in other publications.

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40.Excerpts of *Progress* reproduced in "Suffrage and Liquor," The *Woman's Journal*, Sept. 20, 1913.

41.The excerpts appeared in: "A Story That Tells Itself," *Woman's Journal*, Oct. 20, 1917; "The Bulletin," *Wisconsin Citizen*, June 1913; "Suffrage and Liquor," The *Woman's Journal*, Sept. 20, 1913.

42.Excerpt in: "The Irony of It," *The Wisconsin Citizen*, August 1913.

43.*Bonfort's*, 1910-1919, passim.

44."Woman Suffrage in Washington," *Bonfort's*, Nov. 25, 1910, p. 84; "Bad Outlook for Washington," *Bonfort's*, Dec. 25, 1910, p.176; "Reform Everywhere," *Bonfort's*, May 25, 1911, p. 82.

45."Wisconsin President's Address," *Bonfort's*, June 10, 1911, p.124. Linneman also identified local option, the initiative, and the referendum as legislative weapons wielded by the prohibitionists.

46."The Defeat of Suffrage," *Bonfort's*, Oct. 10, 1912, p.440-42.

47."Universal Suffrage vs. Prohibition," *Bonfort's*, Nov. 25, 1912, p.58, 78-79.

48."The Elections," *Bonfort's*, October 12 1914.

49."Women and Prohibition," *Bonfort's*, Jan. 25, 1915.

50."Uncertainty over Elections Removed," *Bonfort's*, Nov. 10, 1915, p.8; "Coming Election," *Bonfort's*, Sept. 10, 1916.

51.*The Western Brewer: and Journal of the Barley, Malt and Hop Trades*, 1910-1919, passim.

52."Los Angeles Women Assist in Voting Down Drastic Prohibition Measure," The *Western Brewer*, Dec. 1911, p.380.

53."Where the Women Vote," The *Western Brewer*, December 1912, p.319.

54."What the Women Did in Illinois," The *Western Brewer*, April 1914, p.191.

55."The USBA Campaign," The *Western Brewer*, Dec. 1914, p.240. The year before this, Pabst had launched an advertising campaign for its Blue Ribbon label, the "beer of quality," that featured a closeup of a smiling man or woman drinking or holding a glass of beer. Here women were consumers. Several of the illustrations show women in a number of settings -- the society girl, the girl next door, the matron. Each woman looks perfectly comfortable and the point seems to be that all kinds of respectable women drink beer. This was a departure from earlier ads that, when they depicted women, usually had them serving men, or, as in the famous Miller "Highlife Girl," had a scantily clad fantasy girl swinging on the moon. The Pabst ad campaign is discussed in "Talks on the Advertising of Beer," the *Western Brewer*, November 1913, 254-56.

56.*USBA Yearbook*, 1910-1919, passim.

57.The cleric, Archbishop Whately, was anti-feminist and anti-suffragist, as were most prominent Roman Catholics of the time. The Church, in fact, took a pronounced stand against woman suffrage. "New Woman and the Temperance Problem," *USBA Yearbook: 1910*, 1778-79. For discussion of the role of the Catholic Church in Anti-suffrage, see, for example: Richard L. Camp, "From Passive Subordination to Complementary Partnership: The Papal Conception of a Woman's Place in Church and Society Since 1878," The Catholic Historical Review 86 (July 1990): 506-525; James Kenneally, "Catholicism and Woman Suffrage in Massachusetts," The Catholic Historical Review 52 (April 1967): 43-57; "The Pope on Equal Suffrage, Harper's Weekly 53 (May 1, 1909); "Views of the Clergy," Milwaukee Free Press Nov. 3, 1912.

58."Wisconsin," USBA Yearbook: 1912, 113.

59.The editorial appeared in the Post Dec. 21, 1913. Rupert's letter is discussed above.

60."Brewers and Woman Suffrage," USBA Yearbook: 1913, 245-46. It was also about this time that a publicity agent wrote Hugh Fox warning him to be careful about being too open in opposing suffrage. Some magazines had begun to support the reform, others had "tempered the tone of their editorials," the Ladies' Home Journal had lost circulation because of its opposition to it, and other magazines feared to oppose it because they feared alienating their women readers, he said. Finally, the agent advised, the brewers should not risk alienating women (voters) by opposing suffrage. M. Michelson to Fox, Brewing and Liquor Interests, 779-80.

61."Facts Refute Unfair Charge," USBA Yearbook: 1919, 113-14.

62.Brewing and Liquor Interests, 1385.

63."Facts Refute Unfair Charge," USBA Yearbook: 1919, 113-14.

64.Kerr, 185.

65."Facts Refute Unfair Charge," USBA Yearbook: 1919, 113. The earlier investigations in Texas and Pennsylvania, in fact, had resulted in court action and the brewers in those cases had been fined and enjoined from further political activities.

66.According to a survey conducted by the Temperance Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1915, 520 of the country's 2,163 daily newspapers refused liquor advertising; in 1916, that had increased to 840. By April 1917, a survey conducted by the Board of Temperance of the Methodist Church reported that 8,367 newspapers in the country were refusing liquor advertising. "Attitude of Daily Newspapers Augurs Bad for Liquor interests," American Issue, February 1915; "Great Advance in Sentiment Against Newspaper Liquor Advertisements," American Issue, Mar. 18, 1916; "Wet Ads Refused in Numerous Publications Throughout the Country," American Issue, April 7, 1917.

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Music in Political Advertising:
An Analysis of the Use of Music in Presidential Campaign Spots, 1968–1988

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Introduction

Communicators are always concerned about the effectiveness of their messages. This is especially true in political communication. Each candidate tries to persuade voters: (a) that it is worthwhile or important to vote and (b) to vote for him or her.

From the inception of the electoral process in the United States candidates have used various channels to get their messages out to the voters. Newspapers and pamphlets were the first mass media to be used. In the twentieth century, first radio then television became the media that reached the largest number of voters. It is now impossible to run for national office without using television since this medium is consumed by the largest percentage of the population. For many voters, their only knowledge of or "contact" with candidates comes through television spots. It has even been suggested that the electorate votes for the candidate who does "the better job of producing telegenic images" (Diamond & Marin, 1989, p. 388).

Television has the advantage of offering the combination of sight, sound, motion, and color. Candidates have opportunities to stage events and carefully select what aspects of them the voters see. However, television has a disadvantage. The message leaves a fleeting impression because the viewer experiences it only for an instant. Consequently, television advertising, including political advertising, employs a combination of techniques to attract and maintain the attention of the target audience. In addition to the verbal element there are usually nonverbal elements—visual (e.g., soft focus, fast editing, gestures of actors) and aural (namely, music and/or sound effects). Visual techniques are combined with music to make spots more appealing and persuasive.

Political advertising is of particular significance since it is an important source of information about candidates and is a factor in the election of the country's leaders. Presidential campaigns and television spots have been subject to much analysis because of the importance of the office and the election process. It has been stated that "candidate advertisements ... are perhaps the most precisely and carefully crafted part of a modern campaign. Nothing has been left to chance; every aspect has been included for some purpose" (Sabato, 1981, p. 111). In referring to the background music used in many campaign television spots, Devlin (1986) asserted: "Music is often an integral part of the mood setting devices of political ads" (p. 30). Indeed, the practice of using dramatic music as a major device to enhance political television spots can be traced back to the 1968 Nixon campaign (Diamond & Bates, 1988). Since political advertising is designed explicitly as persuasive communication, it offers fertile ground for exploring the role of music in persuasion. This study seeks to increase our understanding of the role of music in facilitating the messages in political advertising.

A content analysis was conducted of the television spots from the general elections of 1968, 1972, 1976, 1980, 1984 and 1988. The year 1968 was chosen as the starting point because it was the first time that music was included as a major device to aid communication. The new color technology was also fully exploited by the Nixon campaign, which created "a series of spots giving life and vitality to well-chosen still photography to give the effect of visual variety to the spot" (Devlin, 1986, p. 27). These pictures were often reinforced by carefully chosen background music (Diamond & Bates, 1988; Jamieson, 1988).

Review of the Literature

In every era, politicians have placed their messages in the mass media that reach the widest audiences. For a long time, this meant the print media. By 1923, a new medium was added to their range of choices when Calvin Coolidge delivered the first broadcast State of the Union address (Jamieson, 1988). In 1924, both Coolidge and John Davis bought radio time for speeches. By the 1928 election a large enough number of homes had radios so that this medium could be used to carry political campaign messages to a large percentage of the electorate. That year marked the first appearance of the spot (Diamond & Bates, 1988). Simultaneous with the refinement of radio was the development of sound in the motion picture industry. By 1927, movie audiences could see and hear the president and his challenger on newsreels (Jamieson, 1988).

Partisan films were produced for this medium and were predecessors of today's television spots.

Television spots were first used in the 1952 election and have become indispensable elements of modern to campaigns because they provide opportunities to educate uninterested voters, in particular, about candidates (Just, Crigler, & Wallach, 1990). Indeed, they "are the predominant public touchstones with the candidate in today's mediated campaigns" (Payne, Marlier, & Baukus, 1989). They can stimulate interest in a campaign and create a more positive affect toward the candidate as a person or intensify polarization of evaluations of the candidate (Atkin & Heald, 1976). They can "create an impression in the mind of the viewer by involving him in an event" (Weitzner, 1971, p. 104). Devlin (1986) documented several reasons why television spots are used. They can (a) make a candidate better known, (b) influence late-deciding or uninterested voters, (c) reinforce supporters and partisans, (d) attack the opposition, (e) develop and explain issues, (f) soften or redefine the candidate's image, (g) target demographic groups, and (h) raise money. In addition, spots "define the nature of the presidency by stipulating the attributes a president should have" (Devlin, pp. 446–447).

The inclusion of music in campaign messages did not begin with the advent of television spots, however. Music has always been a component of American presidential campaigns (Jamieson, 1986, 1988). Before the advent of the electronic media, songs were used to personalize the candidates and amplify campaign themes. Community singing is no longer a widespread practice in our culture. That might explain why the song is no longer an aspect of presidential campaigns. However, background music is often used in campaign television spots to enhance the message. Although much research has been conducted on political advertising, particularly in presidential campaigns, the role of music in political advertising has been given only passing reference in the literature (Devlin, 1986; Gronbeck, 1989; Jamieson, 1986, 1988; Kaid & Davidson, 1986). The elaboration likelihood model developed by Petty and Cacioppo (1981, 1986) provides a framework for understanding the role of music in political advertising.

Elaboration refers to the extent to which a person scrutinizes the issue-relevant arguments contained in the persuasive communication" (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986, p. 7). Elaboration is on a continuum based on motivation and ability to process the message, ranging from "complete elaboration of every argument" to "no thought about the issue-relevant information presented" (Petty & Cacioppo, p. 8). Features of the message, the persuasion context, and the person receiving the message are factors influencing elaboration.

The elaboration likelihood model suggests two routes to attitude change—the central and the peripheral routes. The central route to persuasion, which produces the most enduring form of attitude change, occurs "when persuasion results from thinking about the issue or arguments under consideration" (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981, p. 262). Under the peripheral route, attitude change is influenced by "peripheral persuasion cues," i.e., "factors or motives inherent in the persuasion setting that are sufficient to produce an initial attitude change without any active thinking about the attributes of the issue or the object under consideration" (Petty & Cacioppo, p. 256). Most television viewing occurs in low-involvement situations. Viewers often consider advertising an interruption to programming and are not always motivated to attend to the messages. Consequently, the peripheral route to persuasion is often taken. Peripheral cues include source expertise, source likability, nonverbal behavior, and background music (an affective cue).

Research has shown that background music might be a factor affecting the persuasiveness of a televised message (Alpert & Alpert, 1990; Hecker & Stewart, 1988). Ellis and Altman (cited in Seiter, 1987) declared: "the ... soundtrack—speech, music, and sound effects—entirely dominates the image by determining when we actually look at the screen" (p. 26). This capability of music to influence the interpretation of an audiovisual production is attributed to its connotative characteristics.

Music (particularly instrumental music) is not explicit like language or photographic images. Consequently, the listener often ascribes connotative or extramusical meanings that are affective and descriptive. These meanings are shaped by convention and are shared by a culture (Dasilva et al., 1984; Radocy & Boyle, 1979).

Music is therefore used to express moods and create connotations that facilitate the audience's interpretation of a dramatic presentation. Writers and producers expect that the music on a soundtrack would be interpreted by the majority of the audience in a similar manner—that the music would shape the interpretation of the visual images. This accounts for the formulaic (cliched) nature of film music (and dramatic music for other media, such as television). Since the audience has learned to associate certain sounds with certain emotional responses, these formulas can assist the audience in interpreting the visual images as the director intended. For example, a sudden swell in dynamics (volume) can highlight sudden dramatic tension. Thus, film music has been described as "the hypnotic voice bidding the spectator to believe, focus, behold, identify, consume" (Gorbman, 1987, p. 69).

Two main categories of music are used in audiovisual productions (film, television dramas or sitcoms, television spots, etc.). These are source music and underscore or background music:

> each [is] distinguished by its relationship to the action in the film or video. *Source music* emanates from a visual source within the film narrative—for example, an actor singing, . . . on camera; . . . Underscore music has no definable source within the picture and is designed to enhance the emotion of the picture in a less conspicuous way. (Carlin, 1991, p. 1)

The terms "diegetic" and "nondiegetic" have also been used to describe these two categories of music. Source music is diegetic while underscore music is nondiegetic (Burns & Thompson, 1987; Gorbman, 1987).

Palmer (1981) asserted that in film, music brings the screen and the audience into a closer relationship, adding a third dimension to the two-dimensional representation of the camera. He contended that "music, being by nature fluid, ambiguous and elusive of definition, can set up emotional vibrations in the mind of the audience which may complement, supplement or even contradict the visual image" (p. 388). Seidman (1981) asserted that the music "should be audible enough to provide some atmosphere, but not be so noticeable that it distracts from the more significant components of the message" (p. 51). Gorbman (1987) suggested:

> The musical score's rhythmic, textural, and harmonic qualities, expressive via cultural musical codes, emphasize latent or manifest narrative content through a synergetic relationship with the other channels of filmic discourse. In emphasizing moods or feelings, in specifying or delineating objects for the spectator's attention, music enforces an interpretation of the [narratively implied spatiotemporal world of the actions and characters]. (Gorbman, 1987, p. 32)

In addressing the effect of background music on attitudes toward film, Marshall and Cohen (1988) argued that the congruence between the internal structure of the film and the musical accompaniment influences "attentional strategy to and subsequent encoding of information in the film" (p. 110). Marshall and Cohen (1988) concluded that "effects of musical accompaniment on the interpretation of a character in a film may arise if the music, through congruence, alters the pattern of attention toward the characters in the film and, at the same time, provides connotations" (p. 110). Seidman (1981) stated: "The best filmmakers realize that musical accompaniment enhances the emotional impact of their work" (p. 52). Gorbman (1987) went a step further and declared: "Change the score on the soundtrack, and the image-track can be transformed" (p. 30).

The connotative or affective meaning that is interpreted from background music is based on the juxtaposition of musical elements—tempo, melody, rhythm, texture, timbre, and dynamics. Vinovich (cited in Seidman, 1981) suggested that the arrangement and the instrumentation of the music might be more important than the melody. For example, a funeral march "played in a fast tempo and high pitch, probably would be perceived as a humorous, rather than a solemn, piece" (p. 53).

Music is often used in television programming, especially spots, in much the same way it is used in film—as source music and as underscore music. Huron (1989) identified six ways that music can contribute to advertising. The first is entertainment. The second is providing continuity by "tying together a sequence of visual images and/or a series of dramatic episodes, narrative voice-overs, or a list of product appeals." Related to this is the ability to "heighten or emphasize dramatic moments or episodes" (Huron, p. 561). Music can facilitate memorability of a product or the product's name. The fourth way in which music contributes to advertising is by providing lyrical language. The fifth technique of musical enhancement indicated by Huron (1989) is targeting. Advertisers have identified musical styles with different social and demographic groups. Thus, musical style "may function as a socioeconomic identifier (Huron, p. 567). Finally, Huron discussed the importance of music as authority establishment, i.e., to enhance the credibility of a spot. This is closely linked to musical style. Differences in musical taste are related to race, sex, age, and social class groupings (Huron, 1989; Lewis, 1975, 1987). Huron, therefore, argued:

> A successful advertisement is able to strike some meaningful chord—something the listener values. The product itself rarely carries sufficient appeal alone, so advertisers will endeavor to link or join the product to some cultural value which stirs more profound allegiances.... (pp. 568–569)

These ideas are supported by Baird (1990) who asserted that one of the tasks of the composer of music for commercials "is to select the correct musical ingredients to subliminally target the commercial to the appropriate audience demographic" (p. 71).

Other researchers have suggested that music might have a positive effect on the perception of products and intent to purchase. In a classical conditioning experiment, Gorn (1982) discovered that subjects indicated preference for products that were associated with music they liked. Park and Young (1986) found that in low involvement situations, background music as a peripheral persuasion cue seemed to influence brand attitude formation. In investigating the relationship between music and individuals' responses to advertising, Stout and Leckenby (1988) found a higher purchase intent for products in spots with music.

Although studies have examined the role of music as a peripheral persuasion cue in retail advertising, much attention has not been paid to its role in political advertising. This study is a step in correcting this deficiency. It documents the use of music in political advertising through a content analysis of general election television spots from 1968 through 1988. The results provide a greater understanding of how music has been used in this important form of persuasive communication.

Research Questions

The television spots from the general election campaigns of 1968, 1972, 1976, 1980, 1984, and 1988 were content analyzed. The following research questions were posed:

RQ_1: Are musical elements (such as tonality, timbre, and tempo) utilized in specific ways in positive and negative spots?

RQ_2: Are musical elements (such as tonality, timbre, and tempo) utilized in specific ways in image and issue spots?

RQ_3: Are certain musical genres more likely to be utilized in presidential campaign television spots?

RQ_4: Are spots in specific visual styles more likely to contain background music?

Method

Since previous studies had not focused on the use of background music in presidential campaign television advertising, this study looked at the universe of the spots from the 1968, 1972, 1976, 1980, 1984, and 1988 campaigns. These were the Nixon-Humphrey-Wallace, Nixon-McGovern, Carter-Ford, Reagan-Carter, Reagan-Mondale, and Bush-Dukakis campaigns, respectively. The spots that were content analyzed were from the general elections (the post-primary periods after the candidates have been selected by their respective parties).

The unit of analysis was defined as the spot. A total of 646 English-speaking spots from the 1968–1988 presidential general elections were coded with an 82.8% reliability. Because the study looked at the universe of spots aired during this period, tests of significance were not conducted (Stempel, 1981). The spots were obtained from the Political Commercial Archive at the University of Oklahoma and from Aristotle Industries. The spots were coded for length, whether they were positive or negative, whether or not they contained music, visual style, musical genre, tempo, tonality, and timbre. The topics and the verbal descriptions of the candidates were noted.

The number of spots coded was as follows:

1968	25 spots from the Humphrey campaign (Democratic Party)
	30 spots from the Nixon campaign (Republican Party)
	8 spots from the Wallace campaign (American Independent Party)
1972	39 spots from the McGovern campaign (Democrat)
	28 spots from the Nixon campaign (Republican)
1976	44 spots from the Carter campaign (Democrat)
	76 spots from the Ford campaign (Republican)
1980	93 spots from the Carter campaign (Democrat)
	160 spots from the Reagan campaign (Republican)
1984	43 spots from the Mondale campaign (Democrat)
	43 spots from the Reagan campaign (Republican)
1988	39 spots from the Dukakis campaign (Democrat)
	18 spots from the Bush campaign (Republican)

Altogether, there were 283 spots from Democratic candidates, 355 from Republicans, and 8 from the candidate of the American Independent Party.

The spots were coded as issue or image. The use of the terms "issue" and "image" was based on Garramone's (1986) classification. Some spots emphasize the candidate's stand on issues while in others, the candidate might not address the audience and the candidate's stand on the issues is not presented (Kaid & Sanders, 1978; Shyles, 1984, 1986). According to Garramone, image spots not only have a preponderance of information about the candidate's personal qualities; they emphasize visual content. In "issue" spots, on the other hand, the candidate often explains "his policies either to the camera (i.e., talking head) or to constituents represented in the commercial" (Garramone, p. 240).

Each spot was further coded for visual style, using Devlin's (1986) categorization. Spots were identified as talking head, cinéma verité (showing the candidate in real life settings interacting with people), man-in-the-street ("real people" talking about the candidate or his opponent), and testimonial (prominent politicans or other famous people speaking on behalf of the candidate). The category biography was used to code spots that chronicled the candidate's career, while spots containing several discrete sequences were coded as documentary. The topics covered in the spots and specific verbal descriptions of the candidate were recorded. When the spots were coded, the spoken words that described or indicated the candidates' qualities (e.g., leadership, honesty, experience) were noted. These verbal descriptions were grouped into clusters. The categories used in data analysis were: leadership, honesty, experience, and empathy.

The genre of the music was identified as being of the "classical" tradition or the "nonclassical" tradition. The term "classical tradition" is used in the broader, popular sense to refer to music exemplifying the styles of the Baroque, Classical, Romantic, or Twentieth-Century periods. The term "nonclassical" refers to popular music styles, e.g., country, jazz, easy listening. The mode (major, minor, atonal) was also coded. In Western music, tonality provides character. For example, the major mode is often associated with feelings of happiness while the minor mode is usually associated with sadness. "Timbre" is the tone quality produced by each instrument that distinguishes it from another and gives different qualities to music when used in various combinations with other instruments. "Tempo" refers to degrees of fast and slow in music.

Results and Discussion

Most of the spots created were 30-second spots (53.9% of the spots). Most of the spots did not contain any music: only 32.5% (210) of the spots. This reflects the fact that in 1968 and 1972, for example, the Democratic candidates (who lost those elections) did not use music in their spots. The Republicans began developing documentary spots with soundtracks in 1972. However, there was an increase in the use of music by all candidates over the years. In 1984 and 1988, however, most of the spots contained music (see Table 1). This trend is probably related to the increasing sophistication of campaign strategists in the use of the television medium.

The majority of the spots were issue spots (85.6%) rather than image spots (14.4%), contrary to some concerns that television has caused politicians to favor style over substance. This was the case even in the 1988 Bush-Dukakis campaign. Image spots were more likely to contain background music than issue spots (40.9% to 31.1%). It would appear that despite the desire to take advantage of all of the benefits of the television medium, candidates still think it important to present their views on the issues to the viewers. It might also mean that voters expect to base their decisions on the candidate's stand on the issues. Thus, even when emotional appeals were made in the spots, they were made within the context of the major issues of the particular election.

Overall, there were more positive than negative spots (54.8% compared to 45.2%) despite the fact that: (a) in 1980 and 1988 there were more negative spots aired than positive spots and (b) in 1984 Walter Mondale had aired a majority of negative spots. Positive spots included music more often than negative spots (46% of the positive spots compared to (16.1% of the negative spots) and used major tonality and medium tempi more than negative spots. An examination of the spots of the 1968 and the 1988 campaigns revealed that not only was there more negative advertising in 1988 but that the nature of negative advertising has changed. In 1968, the claims were implicit. Candidates often refrained from specifically naming the opponent or the opposing party. In 1988, candidates tended to name their opponents in negative spots. Image spots tended to be positive more often than issue spots. Since image spots tend to focus more on personal traits of candidates, this type of spot was used more often to present a favorable view of the candidate rather than to criticize the opponent.

The Use of Musical Genre

Of the spots containing background music, more than half of these contained classical music (59.5%). The President is the Head of State and there are codes of conduct in interactions between the president and the public which are designed to preserve the dignity of the office. Since classical music is often associated with the upscale and the sophisticated, the serious and the formal, this music might have been considered the most appropriate for background music in presidential campaign spots. Conversely, rock music and country music were not used very often. Country music has been traditionally associated with the South and with rural lifestyles. In 1976, Jimmy Carter used country music in spots that made appeals to Southern voters. The presidency is a national office. The use of country music, even in spots targeted to Southern voters, might cause the candidate to be perceived as regional. It might also detract from the high status associated with the presidency.

Rock music has often been associated with youth and has often been identified with rebellion. It would seem that except for when a candidate was addressing young people specifically, rock music was not used. This is exemplified in two of the spots in which it was used. In the 1968 election, which was a period in which there was much turmoil over Vietnam and many young people felt alienated, Richard Nixon used rock music in a spot that solicited the youth vote. Similarly, a 1988 Dukakis spot used rock music to indicate Dukakis' willingness to increase college tuition benefits. In order to have a candidate elected president, campaign managers have to address the candidate's need to receive votes from a wide cross-section of the voters. Care has to be taken to consider the segment of the population that is most likely to vote in an election—the older voters. Candidates need strategies that do not alienate older voters. This might account for the limited use of rock music in the campaigns.

After classical music, easy listening music was the most often occurring genre (17.6% of the spots with music). The audience would have experience with easy listening music (which is sometimes called "elevator" music) as background sound. This kind of music is often neutral; it does not evoke strong feelings of like or dislike. It can be used as a filler in a spot for a national campaign that is making an appeal to a wide cross-section of people.

Jazz was used sparingly (3.3% of the spots with music). Jazz is linked with African-American culture. Candidates running for national office might prefer not to be associated with specific ethnic groups. Although candidates sometimes court the African-American vote, they might be concerned that any music associated with African-Americans might suggest a very strong alignment with that ethnic group and alienate white voters in the process. This might also account for the fact that no music of the rhythm and blues style was used in any of the campaign spots under study.

Ethnic music, such as music from China that is not familiar in the American cultural context, was used very little (2.4% of the spots with music). An example of the limited use was noted in 1972 when ethnic music was used effectively by Richard Nixon in the documentary spots that portrayed him as an important world leader. Nixon was shown arriving in different countries meeting with other world leaders. More than one musical excerpt was used in these spots. The music changed every time Nixon was shown greeting the leaders of each country and music associated with that country was heard in the background. In this case, music facilitated the message by drawing attention to the verbal and visual cues presented in the spots.

Patriotic music was used sparingly (5.7%). Nixon used patriotic music in spots dealing with defense and foreign policy. Reagan used this type of music in spots dealing with his personal and political accomplishments. Thus, Reagan used patriotic music to associate himself with the strong feelings of nationalism he was trying to evoke in the voters. Republicans have tended to exploit patriotism to appeal to voters. It is interesting to note that only Republican candidates used any form of patriotic music.

The Use of Tempo

Medium tempi were used more frequently than both slow and fast tempi (71% of the spots with music). A medium tempo reflects the pace at which most people walk. Accordingly, it is a comfortable pace. This pace of music flows might be less distracting than either fast or slow music. Even though the music in a spot might facilitate the message by providing a context, it is also necessary for the verbal aspect of the message to be heard by the viewer.

Slow music was used in a higher percentage of issue spots (9.4%) than image spots (6.5%). Surprisingly, a greater percentage of positive spots than negative spots used slow music (9.9% compared to 7.9%). Although slow music is often associated with sad occasions, it can also be expansive and lend dignity to a message.

More image spots than issue spots used fast music (16.1% compared to4.3%). In addition, more positive spots than negative spots contained fast music. The greatest percentage of spots that contained fast music were those that focused on the personal and political accomplishments of the candidate. These tended to be positive image spots. Fast-paced music can sometimes distract from the spoken word, since it can provide a "busy" background, giving a feeling of restlessness. However, fast music can also lend excitement and propel the action forward or give a feeling of happiness to an occasion. The spots that focused on the personal accomplishments of the candidates certainly aimed to elicit positive feelings about the candidate.

The Use of Tonality

Music in the major mode was most often used (74.8% of the spots with music). The major mode gives a feeling of happiness while the minor mode can contribute to a feeling of sadness. Atonality is often associated with uncertainty, e.g., this type of music is used in thrillers and other suspense films. Spots about the personal accomplishments of the candidates (generally positive spots) more often used bcakground music exemplifying only major tonality: 88.5% of these spots containing music used major tonality. None of these spots used atonal music.

The Use of Timbre

Brass timbres were the most dominant timbres (42.9% of the spots with music). Brass timbres were more often heard in positive and image spots. Brass instruments have been associated with the military and with pomp and circumstance. Brass instruments can contribute to an impression of courage and resoluteness. Brass timbres can, therefore, provide an appropriate backdrop for a candidate seeking to become commander-in-chief.

Vocal music was not used very often in these general election spots (11.4%). A song was written for the Ford campaign (it did not contain any references to the candidate and was not meant for community singing). This song was used in various musical arrangements—both vocal and instrumental. Music with lyrics can distract from a spoken message. Thus, instrumental music would be more appropriate when music plays a background role to the spoken word.

The Use of Visual Style

Almost all of the documentary spots and a majority of the biographical spots included background music. Both documentary and biographical spots very often contain background music. The music can make the spot more attractive and also support the favorable impression that is being created.

In man-in-the-street, talking head, and testimonial spots, what is said of the candidate and/or of his opponent is of the greatest importance. These spots, particularly the man-in-the-street and the testimonial, allow the campaign to make statements about the candidate or his opponent that might be too strong for the candidate himself to make. Perhaps the focus on the message determined the decision not to use music in these types of spots (see Table 2).

Verbal Contexts

One of the most important functions of the president is to provide leadership. Consequently, descriptions stressing the candidates' leadership qualities were most often used. Descriptions of experience were used the least. Empathy and honesty were referred to almost equally. Most of the descriptions were found in testimonial spots. This was not unexpected since the purpose of a testimonial spot is to explain specifically why a candidate is qualified for office. It was, therefore, not surprising that most of the spots containing explicit verbal descriptions of the candidate did not include background music.

Conclusion

Product advertisers have always used television spots to present their products in a flattering manner to persuade viewers to make purchases. To do this, products are featured with attractive sources in ideal settings, and music is often included in television advertising. Because of commercial clutter and the fact that most television viewing occurs in low involvement situations, music in advertising can help attract and maintain the attention of the audience, thus increasing the likelihood of the message being heard.

During the period under study, the Republican Party won all of the elections except for the 1976 election. Many factors besides advertising or the inclusion of music in advertising contribute to winning elections. However, there is evidence that Republicans employed more conventions associated with entertainment media (including cinematographic style and background music) than Democrats. In 1976 when Jimmy Carter won the election, a greater percentage of his spots contained music than the Ford spots. It could be that candidates who air a larger percentage of spots with music might be generally more systematic in exploiting the advantages of the television medium.

The attention of the audience can be maintained through their involvement with the characters in an audiovisual presentation. Many types of audiovisual presentations—drama, comedy, and even advertising—achieve this through audience identification with heroes and villains. Political advertising is no exception to this. The choice of musical genre, therefore, is an important aspect of production. In this society, conventions have been established with regard to the connotations of musical genre. The use of primarily one musical genre could provide a unifying theme and support the creation of a consistent image for a candidate. For example, in 1984 and 1988 the Democratic candidates used a variety of musical genres in their spots unlike the Republican candidates who relied on classical music in their spots. In addition to the high status enjoyed by classical music, the reliance on one genre helped to make these Republican campaigns seem more focused. It is important that the goal(s) of an audiovisual presentation be clearly established so that the verbal and the nonverbal elements can be combined to provide unity and coherence to the message. The same is true of musical elements, such as tonality, tempo, and timbre. These conventions should be observed so that the music does not distract from the message.

Music can serve as a facilitator by highlighting important aspects of a message. A striking example of this occurred 1972 when the Nixon campaign represented various countries nonverbally by not only showing the candidate meeting the people, but by playing music associated with those countries. In these situations, the music reinforced the information being disseminated in the message. Given the fact that (a) the voters who are most likely to be influenced by television advertising are undecided voters and (b) most television viewing occurs in low involvement situations, it would seem that the inclusion of music in political television spots could be of benefit to the candidate.

This study is a first step in systematically identifying, quantifying, and analyzing the apparent conventions in the background music of television spots, specifically presidential campaign spots. By analyzing the occurrence of musical elements and genres within the context of the visual and verbal cues of presidential spots, this study provides an understanding of how background music might be used to attract and maintain the attention of the television audience. In addition, the results of this study suggest that, if used carefully, background music can provide aural cues to reinforce the candidate's message by highlighting the important points being made in the spot. Future studies using both qualitative and quantitative approaches can provide a fuller understanding of the role of music as a facilitator in political advertising.

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Appendices

Table 1

Percentage of Spots with Music for Each Candidate

Candidate	% Spots with Music
Humphrey	0%
Nixon (1968)	45.2%
Wallace	0%
McGovern	0%
Nixon (1972)	50%
Carter (1976)	27.3%
Ford	24%
Carter (1980)	23.7%
Reagan (1980)	21.3%
Mondale	60.5%
Reagan (1984)	76.7%
Dukakis	56.4%
Bush	83.3%

Table 2

Use of Music with Visual Style

Visual Style	% with Music
Talking head	15.9%
Cinéma verité	30.2%
Man-in-the-street	14.5%
Testimonial	2.4%
Biographical	73.3%
Production	42.8%
Documentary	94.9%
Other	42.2%

"Turf Wars": Journalists' Claims to Political Communication Jurisdiction in the New Media Era

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"Turf Wars": Journalists' Claims to Political Communication Jurisdiction in the New Media Era

Emerging media technologies have fostered new forms of political communication, from televised town halls to political cable channels, that may challenge journalists' role as providers of political news. Applying occupational sociological theory, this paper examines claims of journalists in news and commentary focusing on several new political communication forms. The analysis suggests that journalists are engaged in a technologically-inspired jurisdictional struggle for control of political communication work tasks with politicians, the public and other non-journalists.

"Turf Wars": Journalists' Claims to Political Communication Jurisdiction in the New Media Era

Introduction

American journalists have long sought to build and sustain the public's acceptance as their primary providers of political news and editorial commentary. Among the strategies journalists have employed over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to ensure that such forms of political communication work tasks become accepted as their bailiwick, is the issuance of jurisdictional claims in the public sphere.[1] Such statements have included, among other things, journalistic articles and editorials, prospectuses, libel courtroom testimony, advertisements, obituaries, and autobiographies, among other things. And while journalists have managed to win various measures of jurisdiction over such work roles, like all groups who do so, they are always vulnerable to challenges from other groups who at times seek to encroach on their occupational territory.

This paper concerns a possible challenge to journalists' jurisdiction over the provision of political news and commentary, one brought about by technological innovation. During the past few years, new and emerging technologies have begun to reconfigure the old political communication terrain by bringing Americans an array of new media products. Joining the older journalistic political news and information products are new political communication services, such as cable channels and information superhighway newsletters devoted entirely to the provision of political news and commentary. Also recently, technology has provided Americans with a new version of the town hall meeting. Often referred to as electronic town halls (ETMs), these technologically-inspired political communication vehicles electronically link politicians to citizens across America, thereby bypassing journalists in the process. All of these new services have something in common: They come to Americans with promises that they will provide a much better brand of political communication than they're used to getting from the journalists who provide the old services.

While mass communication scholars have studied various aspects of the impact of new technologies on the media and political environments, few have directed their attentions to the impact of such on the broader occupational structure of journalism.[2] Research for this paper begins an exploration of this topic by asking whether new technologically-inspired political communication forms have triggered a dispute over journalistic political communication work tasks. The following section further explains the paper's theoretical underpinnings, as well as explicates its research questions and method.

Sociological Occupational Theory

A view that technology can often be a fundamental precipitator of occupational and professional development is widespread among the members of the sociological discipline. Among such scholars is Andrew Abbott, who has recently articulated a historical sociological model that attempts to explain many aspects of professional development. Abbott argues that group competition for control of work tasks is crucial to the development of occupational group boundaries, and to ignore such struggles is to miss the true histories of occupational and professional groups.[3]

In addition, Abbott argues that groups compete together within broader work systems for control of professional work tasks. Within such systems, he explains, groups are interdependent, and change is often counterprogressive. As a result, even the most powerful groups can lose jurisdictional control due to the impact of historical forces outside their control. According to Abbott:

> In reality the professions are a diverse lot--winners and losers, public officials and private individuals, autocrats and subordinates. Many a profession has gone from rags to riches, not a few the other way. Many claimants have never found a niche in the system at all. Yet all these are a part of professional life. Beyond this diversity. . . the development of the formal attributes of a profession is bound up with the pursuit of jurisdiction and the besting of rival professions.[4]

While some of the more common precipitators of change are social, economic, and political movements and events, new technologies counts as one of the most potent precipitators of jurisdictional crises.[5] According Abbott, emerging technologies create new jurisdictions and changes old ones both rapidly and often. In addition, he says, "Just as technology creates jurisdictions, so also it destroys them."[6]

In light of such thinking on occupational development, this paper asks whether the emergence of new technologically-inspired political communication products has precipitated a jurisdictional crisis within the political communication work system. To explore this question, research examined traditional journalists' statements about such new political communication products to determine whether they include messages that suggest their political news work roles are threatened.

The paper's focus is narrowed to examining the possible impact of four of the newer political communication services: cable television's new political affairs channels, National Empowerment Television (NET); electronic town hall (ETMs); electronic forums (EFs); and, finally, talk-show democracy.

Newspaper and magazine articles, columns, and editorials published since 1992 that focus in whole or in part on these four political communication forms were examined in the research. The following more specific research questions was explored in the examination of such texts: Do the authors of the articles, editorials and columns examined specifically discuss the occupational roles of journalists and, if so, what themes appear within their statements?

To answer this question, the paper employs the simplest qualitative literary analysis. While it is recognized that closer textual analysis might be used later to explore whether journalistic statements embody connotative messages as well as more denotative ones, since this is the earliest exploration of these questions, the simplest analysis is employed.[7] The following section provides additional information about the political communication forms studied in the paper, along with the research findings.

Findings

Four major new forms of political communication in presidential election campaigns and presidential politics emerged during and since the 1992 campaign that are possible sites of jurisdictional disputes between journalists and politicians arising from the use of new technologies. Three of the four, ETMs, EFs, and talk shows, will be discussed in this section, with the remaining form, National Empowerment Television, discussed in the final section of the findings.

The first political communication form studied in the research, the electronic town meeting, or ETM, was proposed by candidate Ross Perot as a means of promoting direct democracy. Although never put into practice, the ETM concept drew substantial coverage during the campaign. The true ETM is patterned after the New England town meeting, which is centered on citizens, not politicians, and which is a process concluding with a majority vote that becomes the law of the town. An ETM must include the elements of discussion, debate, deliberation, and voting.

The second, electronic forums, or EFs, have been incorrectly called electronic town meetings, even though in reality they are quite different forms of political communication. Used during the campaign by Perot, President George Bush and then-Gov. Bill Clinton, as well as during the Clinton presidency, the EF involves the appearance of one or more candidates, or the president or other office holders, before a television studio audience. With a television station or network host and the possibility of satellite hookups with other television studio audiences, the candidate or office holders answer questions from the public, represented by the studio audience.

They differ from ETM's in that they are no more than a televised exchange between the politicians and people present in the studio, with no deliberation and voting on questions of public concern. Although they offer less opportunities for public input, however, they resulted in increased voter interest and turnout, and helped clarify the candidates' position.[8]

The third form of political communication, talk-show democracy, involves the appearance of a candidate or office holder on regularly presented radio and television talk and call-in programs, such as "Larry King Live," Donahue," and "Arsenio."

The potential jurisdictional dispute generated by these new political forms of communication would center on the challenges presented to the traditional role of journalists at the center of political communication, mediating between politicians and the public. The ETM would eliminate journalists as the agenda-setters and interpreters of political discussion, putting control of the political communication process in the hands of politicians, or President Perot, who would communicate directly on television to an audience of the electorate who would then be asked to respond by voting on an 800 number, by postcard, or on computer. Instead of simply eliminating the journalist's function, as the ETM does, the EF replaces journalists with non-journalists in the studio audience who usurp the role of asking questions. The talk-show format also replaces the traditional political journalist, only in this case with the non-journalist media personality, such as Larry King or Phil Donahue.

ETMs, EFs and Talk Shows

A search of the National Newspaper Index found 88 news and opinion articles focusing in all or in part on these three new forms of political communication from January 1992 through December 1994. Of the 88 articles, 16 discussed the new media technology as a group; 19 focused on the ETM concept; 28 were about EFs, or televised electronic forums; and 25 were about the use of talk shows in political communication.

Three themes emerged in the coverage. The most frequently articulated theme, that journalists are being bypassed by politicians in the political communication process, was embodied within 32 of the articles (36%). A second theme, that the increased role of politicians raises questions of manipulation and control of political communication, was apparent in 12 (14%) of the 88 articles. A third most frequently voiced theme, concerning the role of the public and other non-journalists, such as talk-show hosts, as interviewers replacing journalists, also was expressed in 13 of the articles (15%).

Journalists' concern about the threat posed by these new forms of political communication to their jurisdictional work boundaries is reflected in the overall coverage. Of the 88 news articles, columns and editorials examined, 46 (or 52%) mention at least one theme surrounding the disputed work jurisdictions. Excluding articles covering EFs, two-thirds of the articles (40 out of 60) discussed at least one jurisdictional dispute. Twelve (75%) of the general new media articles mentioned at least one theme, as did 12 (63%) of the 19 articles about ETMs concept and 16 (64%) of the articles about political aspects of talk shows. By contrast, only six (21%) of the 28 articles discussing EFs mentioned any jurisdictional issues. Mostly, these articles reported the content of the EFs, including the questions of the audiences and responses of the candidates or office holders.

The following sections provide quotes that illustrate the range of journalistic concerns about their work roles.

A. Bypassing Journalists

The language used by journalists to express the most prominent theme, that the providers of new forms of political communication bypass traditional journalists, reflects their concerns about protecting their work jurisdictions. Of the 32 articles that emphasized this theme, most were found in general new media and talk show coverage. Eleven of the 16 new media articles (68%) and 14 of the 25 talk-show articles (56%) commented on the old media being bypassed by the various new political communication forms.

In the articles focusing on the general topic of the new media, relatively neutral terms, such as "unfiltered" and "unmediated," were used to describe the impact of the new forms of political communication, as well as more charged terms, such as "unedited" and "unchallenged." In a 1992 election postmortem, the *Wall Street Journal* noted the EFs used by Bush and Clinton, "with voters asking questions directly, without any filtering by journalists." The article reported:

> . . . The regular press -- TV and print -- played no role in either event, except to report on what they saw and heard. That's the whole idea. The essence of the new media is that it is unmediated. There is no filtering by professional journalists. Voters seem to like that too.[9]

But in the same article, a more pointed evaluation is found in reporting that Perot's cable-TV interviews enabled the candidate to avoid "inquisitive reporters asking tough questions."

Another *Journal* article used the idea of a "diminished role of reporters who actually show up for events,"[10] while another article described the process as bypassing the "critical judgment of traditional journalists." The motivation for politicians, the article reports, is that the network news story has been focusing less on the politicians and more on the correspondents, as the media become more mediated:

> What's even worse . . . is that the network TV reporters "have become increasingly negative, adversarial and antagonistic. . . .They sometimes seem contemptuous of politicians. The politicians don't like that a whole lot, either. And so the name of the game has become: Bypass Sam Donaldson." The answer, or a good part of it, anyway, is interactive TV, where hardly anyone ever asks negative, adversarial, or antagonistic questions.[11]

Other terms also suggest tension between journalists, politicians and the public. All the new technologies, the *New York Times* suggests, share one feature: "they allow politicians to speak to voters more directly, without the interference of network television news reporters." And satellites allow politicians to reach voters "with no intervention from the news media."[12]

In the *Christian Science Monitor's* view, the political strategy was "to get the conventional press out of the way, to cut out the middleman in delivering their messages," as Perot's "end-run of the conventional press was nearly absolute."[13] Precipitating the new forms of political communication, according to a *Washington Post* article, was the public's dislike of the media "pre-chewing their political food" and its desire for "direct access to the primary sources of information."[14] The article added that the public no longer saw the media as "their agents in the campaign process," rejecting the idea that the media are "neutral observers who have no real role in the action."

The *Post* also reported that the new process says "to hell with the word-twisting media middlemen,"[15] and a *Newsweek* article echoed this theme in a comment on a Perot satellite rally, which they claimed brought him to followers "unspun by journalistic chatter."[16] *The Monitor* in a column asserted that appearing on talk shows spared Perot "the abrasive, arrogant (from the critics' point of view) questions of the political reporters."[17]

Bypassing the traditional media was also a paramount issue in articles about talk shows, with 14 of 25 articles (56 %) mentioning this issue. With Bill Clinton's appearance on Arsenio Hall's program, "the campaign battleground shifted even more toward the talk show arena and away from traditional and more serious venues like newscasts and press conferences."[18]

The combative tenor of the jurisdictional dispute over talk shows was also shown in a column by Marvin Kalb, director of Harvard University's Shorenstein Barone Center on Press, Politics and Public Policy, who wrote that the public links "the old media with old politics -- and, in their minds, both be damned." [19] Within the context of this conflict, the media reported the mainstream media's difficulty of interesting politicians in appearing on journalistic programs, such as "Meet the Press" and "Prime Time Live." The *New York Times* found "the programs that were constantly getting short-shrift were those that feature experienced political reporters." In an exchange between Sam Donaldson and Ross Perot:

> Mr. Donaldson, too, has had difficulty booking the candidates on "Prime Time Live" . . . . Mr. Perot said he wanted a live interview to speak "directly" to the audience.

> "I said to Perot,, 'Look, I'm not going to turn my cameras over to you," Mr. Donaldson said. "'Buy your own network.'"[20]

The *Washington Post* reported that the networks, trying to adapt to the talk shows in "the year the network news boys dropped off the bus," offered politicians access to their own talk shows, such as "Today" and "This Morning." The candidates were then able to "bypass the establishment news media."[21] The talk shows also connected candidates to viewers "unedited and unfiltered by Washington reporters."[22] The *New York Times* viewed Bush's appearance on a talk show as evidence of the extent of "efforts to bypass traditional television news coverage."[23]

The issue of bypassing the media was less important to authors of articles about ETMs and EFs. Only three ETM articles (16%) and four EF articles (14%) discuss this issue. For example, as a utopian concept that was proposed as a technique of governance, the ETM, according to the *New York Times,* offered "the promise of a magical, technological answer to . . . the shallowness of a debate framed by the forces of journalism.[24]

The *Washington Post* wrote that the ETM was attractive to the electorate, "but the media would push him toward much greater specificity."[25] As a proposed tool of governance, the ETM was seen in a *New York Times* column as a direct challenge to the core historical tasks of journalists:

> For much of this century, journalists decided which issues to press Presidents on. They also relayed most of the communications between the politicians and the public. . . .
>
> Early in his campaign, Mr. Perot advanced the notion of an electronic town hall. The media reacted as if he said he's been receiving Martian radio signals. Mr. Perot jeeringly told

> reporters he had figured out why the idea of an electronic town hall drove them "crazy": it was because *they* wouldn't be the only one to get to ask the questions any more. He was right.[26]

Writing that "one of the big losers in the new media would appear to be the old media," the *Wall Street Journal* lamented that "traditional reporters . . . have almost forgotten what a news conference looks like.[27]

The EF, which was employed during the campaign and Clinton's presidency, also drew a few comments on bypassing of journalists, although the articles primarily reported on EFs as news stories. An example of a comment on the work jurisdiction of journalists included one issued in a *Wall Street Journal* article that said "town hall meetings also are one of the administration's main methods for going over the heads of the media."[28]

Coverage of EFs tended to blend positive comments with the negative, such as the *Washington Post*, which noted that Clinton's "talkathons" flew "under the radar of the Washington press corps," on the one hand; on the other hand, the article found a positive side to the EFs:

> White House reporters say Clinton's road show contrasts with their limited opportunities to question him and his senior aides.
>
> "There's a certain jealousy factor," said Matt Cooper, White House correspondent for *U.S. News and World Report.* "We would've liked to have a news conference with him before he hauled off to Detroit and did a glitzy town meeting."
>
> But Cooper said town meetings are a good opportunity for citizens to see the president in action. "It's wrong for the media to think of itself as high priests, the only beings blessed with the ability to ask questions," he said. "The press asks too many 'gotcha' questions, where the hope is to elicit a gaffe."[29]

B: Control and Manipulation by Politicians

A second prominent theme in the coverage centered on the role of politicians in the new media, with 12 articles out of the 88 articles (14%) discussing the concern of political manipulation and control. All but one of the articles raising this concern were discussing the ETM concept. The fear of demagoguery and the tyranny of the majority were prime causes cited in these articles. They serve as examples of journalistic efforts to shore up their occupational boundaries. Journalists, they seem to be saying, rather than politicians, ought to be trusted to provide the nation's citizens with political news and commentary.

According to the *New York Times,* for example, the ETM proposal leaves unclear "who is going to be leading and who's going to be led."[30] In another *Times* ' article was a warning that with Perot in charge of the ETM, the process could be manipulated through selection of speakers, questions and audience members.[31] Yet a third *Times'* article reported that with Perot in charge of his toll-free line to launch his candidacy, the electronic vote "inevitably turned out his way.[32]

Part of the problem was attributed in the *Times* to the television medium itself, so that "whoever controls the pictures wins the argument."[33] The fear of demagoguery ran strong in the *Times'* coverage of the ETM, which posed an "enormous potential for manipulating the emotions of people."[34] The *Wall Street Journal* quoted a source as saying that the meetings "could be controlled and manipulated by politicians . . . (such as they have) been used in the past by such tyrants as Napoleon and Mussolini."[35] The danger, a

Times columnist Anthony Lewis asserted, is that the ETM could be "manipulated: shaped by ideologues and demagogues."[36] In another column, Lewis asked: "Who will "make sure" the people understand the issues? The opportunities for manipulation are overwhelming."[37] In an editorial, the *Times* cautioned that in Perot's ETM format, Perot "would be in charge of producing the programs, facilitating loaded selection of speakers, and scripting of questions."[38]

This manipulation, according to the *Christian Science Monitor,* could "alter the balance of power between the executive and legislative branches of the government, and, in the process, diminish journalism's checking function on government. . ."[39]

C: Non-Journalists

The third most prominent theme on the work jurisdiction of journalists expressed in the articles studied in the research focused on the role of the public and other non-journalists in this work system. Thirteen (15%) of the 88 articles commented on the role of the public and talk-show hosts as replacements for journalists as questioners in the political process. All 13 articles were about EFs and talk shows, in which the public and others were seen to be supplanting the journalist.

Reporting and commentary on the role of the public asking questions tended to be ambivalent. Examples include a *Washington Post* article that quoted a Clinton campaign aide as saying that "real voters . . . ask questions that come from the heart and really affect their lives."[40] Journalist Tim Russert added that "the softer interview shows complement the hard-news programs." Balancing these positive statements, the article criticized talk shows "for their lack of aggressive questioning. . . . the format allows the candidates to offer canned responses with little or no follow-up."

A Clinton appearance on a network talk show, the *New York Times* reported, was "warm and appeared to be dominated by representatives of interest groups or questioners who were familiar with and friendly toward Mr. Clinton."[41]

The public was viewed at times as capable questioners, as the *New York Times* reported that Clinton at times had "stumbled into lively encounters."[42] But the idea that journalists ask better questions also persisted. According to the *Washington Post,* "call-in formats allow candidates to speak in generalities with little fear of contradiction, (while) network reporters are more adept at probing for inconsistencies."[43]

Another challenger to the journalistic task of asking questions was the talk show host, who generally was thought to be inferior to the journalist. A *New York Times* source suggested that "as smart as Arsenio Hall might be, I doubt he asks the kind of questions Dan Rather asks."[44] A Martin Kalb *Times'* column noted that "many talk show hosts are not trained journalists," yet it sketched out a

> turf war . . . between the talk shows and traditional evening news, between electronic populism and an elite corps of political reporters . . . and the high-salary stars in New York and Washington resemble 'a barnyard of Chicken Littles,' to quote from columnist David Broder."[45]

In articles about EFs, the same issues appear. Questions from the public were thought to be easier for politicians, with some exceptions, and a balanced view is taken on the role of the public. The White House was seen as favoring "tough questions" from the public because "the questions are almost never as onerous as reporters' queries."[46] At another EF, by contrast, Clinton "was peppered with tough questions on the very subjects he has sought to avoid from reporters in Washington. . . . The questions were as focused, and diverse, as any White House news conference."[47]

For both talks shows and EFs, the journalistic discourse offered examples of acquiescing to a complementary role for the public while retaining an important role for journalists. For example, a *Washington Post* editorial warned journalists against claiming a privileged position in the process, yet argued for the granting of an important role to journalists. Disclaiming the media "priesthood," the *Post* argued:

> It is a journalists' myth that ordinary folks always ask their politicians softball questions, whereas we in the press ask all the searching questions. The press, we think, ought to be wary of setting itself up as an ordained priesthood whose intercession is required to reach the president or ask him questions. The very idea latent in the phrase "going over the press's head to the people" is that there is something illegitimate about a president's talking directly to the airwaves.

But in the next sentence the *Post* urged that the media should retain its "normal functions:"

> The point is that this should not be seen as an excuse to close the press out of its normal functions. There should be regular press conferences, and we note that Mr. Clinton is being pretty slow about these. But there is no reason whatever for him not to speak and speak often to the public directly in these other kinds of forums as well.[48]

National Empowerment Television

In sharp contrast to these findings are the responses of journalists to National Empowerment Television--NET--a 24-per-hour cable channel launched December 6, 1993 in Washington, D.C. According to NET's founders, the channel promises to provide Americans with a radically different brand of public affairs programming than they've used to getting from mainstream journalists. Launched by the unabashedly conservative Free Congress Foundation, NET positions itself as an alternative to C-Span and PBS. As its leadership puts it:

> NET is must-watch television for public policy wonks and junkies, the C-SPAN crowd looking for more spice and pace, and the PBS and public policy crowd looking for more real-time coverage. In short, NET is C-SPAN with an attitude.

NET pledges to offer Americans new links between themselves and Washington, and that NET is more populist and independent in that it isn't controlled by "liberal, elite" mainstream journalism.[49] Maintaining their dedication to "empowering Americans with the strongest weapon available--the truth. . . , " they "Reconnect Americans to Washington," by routinely opening their Washington studio's phone lines to on-the-air callers.

At first glance, NET's programming resembles standard journalistic fare offered on cable, as well as on the networks. Programs with titles such as "Dateline: Washington," "Capitol Watch," "CATO Forum," and "Full Disclosure," feature familiar journalistic fare such as theme music, traditional news stand-ups, and panels. But on closer analysis, NET's public affairs programming offers a different kind of journalism--a brand of journalism practiced by politicians rather than by journalists. While some of NET's programs are presented by professional journalists, albeit journalists with distinct political views, such as their weekly "Insights with Robert Novak" program, others, while being billed as journalistic are hosted by politicians rather than journalists.

The star of one such show is Newt Gingrich, who plays a key role these days in NET. For example, Gingrich stars each week in NET's regular program, "Progress Report," and the channel also regularly airs his controversial series of lectures, "Renewing American Civilization." Featuring Gingrich so prominently has helped bring NET a lot of media attention lately. For example, he chose one of his weekly "Progress Report" segments on which to voice his controversial views on cutting funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. In addition, he recently garnered more attention for the channel by attending an NET fundraising dinner that cost $50,000 per plate to attend.

Scrutiny of Gingrich's "Progress Report" show, and some of NET's other programming reveals a key difference between NET and mainstream journalism. On his "Progress Report" program, he performs as a journalist, rather than strictly as a politician. On a recent segment aired early in March, for example, Gingrich starts the show by telling the audience the news from Washington. And later in the show, he serves as a journalistic interviewer of its guests, one of them an editor from the *Wall Street Journal.*

"Direct Line with Paul Weyrich," is another example of a show billed as journalistic, but led by a politician. President of the Free

Congress Foundation, and NET's president and chief executive officer, although Weyrich cut his career teeth in the 1960s in mainstream journalism, since then, although he has been involved in journalism, his conservative political agenda appears to have driven whatever journalistic activity he has been involved in.[50]

How have mainstream journalists reacted, if at all, to NET's brand of journalism? Is there developing a discourse within journalistic writing about NET's providers that frames them as usurpers of traditional journalistic occupational roles? An examination of 78 newspaper and magazine articles, columns, and editorials published around the country since 1992 revealed little interest among their journalistic authors in framing NET as a threat to journalist's traditional work roles. Instead, journalists have commonly been much more interested in NET's ideological position and connections to Republican and conservative politicians. In fact, journalists only published a handful of articles on NET until last November when Gingrich became a household word. Since then, journalistic coverage of NET has increased, but such has largely been driven by the press' fascination with Gingrich and to the debate over possible congressional cuts to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, rather than concerns about the possible encroachment of traditional journalistic work boundaries by politicians.

The texts studied in the research most commonly characterize NET as a politically-conservative example of one of the journalistic alternatives brought to Americans via new technologies. They are focused on the novelty of the all-public affairs and news channel, rather than on questions of who is providing such programming.[51]

Some of the points raised in the columns were the following: NET claims to be populist, but in reality exists solely to spread a regressive conservative national political agenda; NET largely exists to serve Gingrich's interests; NET is using Gingrich to feather its own nest; despite NET's claims that they are providing Americans with more choices, NET wants to take away Americans' choices; NET is more efficiently and economically run than the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and, as Gingrich and others have suggested, ought to be considered a replacement for it; NET's brand of plebiscitary democracy will make a mess of government, much as has happened in California.[52]

Only one journalist introduced a question of occupational roles, and he did so only peripherally. The title to Thomas Goetz' September/October 1994 *Columbia Journalism Review* article, "I'm Not a Reporter, But I Play One on GOP-TV," seems to insinuate that politicians are posing as journalists. But the article itself did not expand on this theme.[53] Like the rest of the journalists who wrote the articles, editorials and columns examined in the research, the article frame those who produce NET largely as political conservatives who offer a political journalistic product rather than encroachers on traditional journalistic occupational terrain.

Intra-Professional Dialogue on Jurisdiction

The spectrum of these journalistic responses to both the threats and potential of the new media is reflected in the comments of Bill Kovach, publisher of *Nieman Reports,* and a panel of journalists brought together by the Nieman Foundation. Kovach finds opportunity for journalists to sponsor town meetings and spark community activism as the new media take on the role of "community hearthstone" that community newspapers originally filled. If journalists "fail to take part in providing the information base and the forum for community participation," the democratic process will "either find an alternative source of information or fall prey to control by rumor, prejudice and vested interest information."[54] Nieman Foundation panelist Leonard Downie Jr., executive editor of the *Washington Post,* also perceived "wonderful opportunities" for journalism, as electronic democracy creates a demand for journalistically produced information. "The electronic democracy does not cancel out good journalism. It will, in fact, be dependent on good journalism," Downie believes.[55]

The other panelists, by contrast, offered gloomier forecasts on the impact of electronic democracy, reflecting on the expanding role of the public as it encroaches on journalists' work. Lawrence Grossberg, former president of NBC News and PBS, called the public the new "fourth branch of government."

> Where does that leave journalists? I would suggest that far from having the commanding position that journalism used to have, in many respects it is now in the position of a Greek chorus. . . . as "old citizens full of their proverbial wisdom and hopelessness."[56]

Panelist Matthew Wilson, executive editor of the *San Francisco Chronicle,* agreed that electronic democracy has blurred the identity of journalists, as "all of you are communicating to all of you. Each one of you becomes a broadcaster. Each one of you becomes a journalist."[57]

Grossberg found that talk show hosts such as Oprah Winfrey, Phil Donahue, Geraldo Rivera, Larry King and Rush Limbaugh also are usurping the role of journalists.[58] Wilson predicted that funding to support journalists' work of "gathering the news and delivering it" will disappear. "So, the world is changing in a very rapid and dramatic way. I believe it's going to be good for democracy and good for the country. I'm not sure it's going to be good for journalism."[59]

The new media have left journalists in a search for a new role, according to *Wichita Eagle* editor Davis Merritt, who said he believes that journalists "don't have much of a future in the information business as it's developing." The answer, Merritt argues, is for journalists to define themselves as in "the business of democracy" based on "public journalism," which he defined as a journalism growing from "a pragmatic recognition that people flooded with contextless, fragmentary, episodic, value-neutral information can't make effective work of their decision-making."[60]

Analyst Andrew Blau, director of the communications policy project at the Benton Foundation, sums up the argument that the new technology has "radically undermined" the press's roles of organizing information, evaluating information, organizing a public and paying journalists for the value added to information.[61]

Conclusions

This paper explores, in light of sociological thinking on occupational and professional development, whether new technologically-inspired political communication products might be precipitating a jurisdictional crisis between journalists and others who reside together within the political communication work system.

To study this, a total of 166 newspaper and magazine articles, columns, and editorials published across the country from 1992 to the present were examined to determine whether they specifically discussed the occupational roles of journalists viz-a-viz those of the providers of four new forms of political communication: electronic town meetings, electronic forums, televised talk show democracy, and National Empowerment Television. The findings detailed above suggest that traditional journalists are concerned that non-journalists involved with political communication services may be encroaching on their traditional work jurisdiction as the citizenry's primary providers of political news and commentary. However, it appears that there are differences in how they perceive the relative dangers posed by these political communication services. For example, in discussing the general concept of the new media, as well as electronic town meetings and talk shows, journalists disseminated substantial journalistic reporting and commentary about the roles of journalists, politicians and the public in these communication forms. Journalists, however, paid much less attention to jurisdictional issues that might come out of electronic forums, and almost no jurisdictional questions were raised about the startup and development of the political cable television network, National Empowerment Television.

Among the jurisdictional themes that emerged in the totality of coverage examined of these new political forms of communication, journalists primarily expressed concern about the bypassing of traditional news media and journalists by politicians seeking to communicate directly to the public in an unmediated and unfiltered format and by the public seeking access to politicians without mediation by journalists. A second concern expressed in the news articles and commentaries was the control and manipulation of the political communication process by politicians in the absence of journalists. A third question, although met with more ambivalence than the first two themes, was the usurpation of the traditional journalists interviewing function by both the public and talk show hosts, themselves not journalists.

Journalists also raised different questions in their news articles and commentaries, depending on the particular form of political communication. When journalists were discussing the new media technologies in general, the most commonly-raised concern expressed by journalists focused on their being bypassed in the process. The same held true for news and commentary about the emergence of talk shows as new political communication forms. In discussing talk shows, however, and EFs, discussion also focused on the question of the role of the public and other non-journalists, such as talk show hosts, in usurping the occupational territory of journalists.

Neither the question of bypassing the news media nor the role of the public as interviewers came into play in journalistic responses to the ETM. The overwhelming issue for journalists in responding to this form of political communication was the danger of control and manipulation of the process by politicians.

The research findings strongly support the contention that the emergence of new forms of political communication using both existing and new technologies has opened new sites of occupational struggle between journalists, on the one hand, and politicians, the public and other non-journalists, on the other hand. Four examples of these new political communication forms, ETMs, EFs, talk shows, and NET, have shown that journalists' jurisdiction over the provision of political news and commentary has been challenged as these new forms restructure the political communication system.

In general, and in some specific cases, journalists have made claims on the work tasks that these forms have disturbed. In other cases, however, by their silence on jurisdictional issues, journalists may be ceding some of their traditional work tasks. Even as they comment on some new forms, such as the political aspects of talk shows, journalists do not claim that they have exclusive jurisdiction over their traditional role as interlocutors of political figures, but only that they not be excluded from carrying out their traditional roles even as the public gains more direct access to politicians in the communication process. Only the future will show whether traditional journalists claims will stand or fall to the challenges that clearly are being brought against their long-held roles in the political communication process.

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Constraints on the Evolution of Talk in Talk Radio

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RUNNING HEAD: Talk Radio

Constraints on the Evolution of Talk in Talk Radio

Abstract

This is a case study of a "shock jock" at a respected news-talk radio station. It examines how he tried to establish norms on the air--negotiated rules governing the process and content of conversation--and how those norms evolved over time. The study uses media sociology and self-organizing systems theory in analyzing how format and organizational culture constrained the evolution of talk on his program, and how talk constrained itself.

Constraints on the Evolution of Talk in Talk Radio

Talk radio has grown rapidly in the United States over the past decade (Hoyt, 1992; Viles, 1992; Fineman, 1993; Jones, 1994). One industry representative said talk had become the number one radio format in the country by 1995 (Phillips, 1995). Some even have credited it with saving AM radio (Lewis, 1993).

As talk radio's popularity has grown, so has concern about it. For some, it is a boon to democracy by allowing the people's voice to be heard via call-in programs; some also view it as a harbinger of the interactive communications media that will flourish in the coming century (Rehm, 1993; Hentoff, 1994; Jost, 1994; Sifry & Cooper, 1995). But others see talk radio as crowding out more substantive news and information (Prato, 1993; Santiago, 1994), or worse, as a tool for demagoguery and sleaze, particularly in the hands of two of its most popular practitioners--Rush Limbaugh and Howard Stern (Andersen, 1993; Lewis, 1993; Prato, 1994; The way things aren't, 1994; Limbaugh's inaccurate responses, 1994; Corliss, 1995; Laufer, 1995). President Clinton himself attacked talk radio as being one-sided and cynical (Petrozzello, 1994), and in the aftermath of the bombing of an Oklahoma City federal building, denounced those who "spread hate" on the air (Phillips, 1995).

The president's initial attack on talk radio came during an interview on KMOX-AM, a CBS owned-and-operated station in St. Louis which helped pioneer the news-talk format in the 1960s and which established itself under manager Robert Hyland as the dominant station in its market. But by the early 1990s, the station's ratings had started to slide, particularly among younger listeners (Smith, 1993). In response, a new management team brought in after Hyland's death tried to reshape the station's sound by starting to air Rush Limbaugh's daily show (the specific target of President Clinton's on-air criticism) and by hiring new local on-air personalities.

This is a case study of the brief tenure of one such personality at KMOX--a so-called "shock jock" named J.C. Corcoran (henceforth referred to as "J.C.").[1] He was known for a provocative, abrasive on-air style which had generated big ratings for FM rock stations in St. Louis but which was different from the norm at KMOX (Holleman, 1993). The study examines J.C.'s tenure at the station, especially how he tried to establish norms on the air and how those norms evolved over time. "Norms" refer to the negotiated rules that govern the process and content of talk among hosts, guests, and callers on talk radio--who sets the agenda for discussion, what is allowed to be said, etc.

In addition, the study examines the constraints on the evolution of talk and norms on J.C.'s program. J.C. faced a particular challenge in that KMOX's established sound was relatively sedate and conservative as well as tightly formatted (featuring frequent breaks for news, sports, weather, etc.). In the words of one observer, Corcoran's task was to "fashion a creative and spontaneous presentation over a seemingly rigid skeleton of news and information" during a time in which "the

KMOX mission statement crie[d] out for a rewrite to save the station from having its ratings plummet" (Hoffman, 1993, pp. 1, 19.) In short, J.C. had to try to establish norms that would encourage fresh talk on his program, and yet do so within the constraints imposed by the station's traditional format and mission.

This study seeks to contribute to the contemporary discussion about talk radio and offer a fresh scholarly approach to the format. It draws upon self-organizing systems theory or "SOST" (Prigogine, 1980) and media sociology (Schudson, 1991) in examining how conversational norms evolve in mass-mediated communication within various constraints. It provides a scheme for studying the power of radio personalities to shape talk on their programs and the limitations on that power. And it synthesizes research in interpersonal, organizational, and mass communication at a time when the lines separating those research areas are becoming increasingly blurred (Levy, 1994).

Previous Studies

Previous scholarly studies of American talk radio generally have chosen one of two focuses--talk radio as interpersonal communication, or talk radio as political communication. For example, Horton and Wohl (1956), Turow (1974), Avery, Ellis, and Glover (1978), Avery and Ellis (1979), Bierig and Dimmick (1979), Tramer and Jeffres (1983), and Armstrong and Rubin (1989) generally have argued that talk programs serve as an important source of human contact for many who are otherwise socially isolated. Others have viewed talk radio as an outlet of political discontent in ways both useful and potentially dangerous. Some (e.g., Crittenden, 1971) have argued that it fosters healthy debate, and some have suggested that it suppresses a more radical critique of American politics and leaves the public "all too vulnerable to irrational fear of specific events and--corollary and more dangerous--to worshipping a personality who promises to control specific events" (Levin, 1987, p. 151).

At least one recent study has taken a somewhat broader view of talk radio. Munson (1993) argues that talk shows are complex and contradictory, belonging neither to the "separate public or private spheres conceived in modernity," but "somewhere between or beyond the two." They make "public spectacle of private passions even as the caller remains to a degree private," but they also make "private spectacle of public passions" (p. 152). And while the talk show may deal with serious issues, it does so playfully; it is a kind of "game" that must be entertaining in order to generate audiences, and yet also must be played by certain "rules" (p. 155), rules that help determine who can say what and how and when it can be said (see also Timberg, 1994).

Hutchby (1991, 1992) has studied these sorts of rules--or norms, as they will be called here--in British talk radio. Drawing upon research in conversation analysis (e.g., Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974), Hutchby examines how hosts engage in "routine skepticism" while taking phone calls from listeners. That is, the hosts "appear to orient to some situated (but informal) requirement" that they find something to disagree with in whatever a caller might say. Callers, meanwhile, "are generally oriented to the task of presenting their opinion and if necessary defending their line against the host's attacks." In short, "talk radio hosts construct controversy, and callers recognise and, on occasion, resist this activity" (Hutchby, 1992, pp. 674, 691). Both sides co-determine and adhere to a set of norms governing their interactions, although they sometimes test these norms. Similarly, Goffman (1981, p. 230) argues that a radio personality occupies a "frame space" which is "normatively allocated": "To speak acceptably is to stay within the frame space allowed one; to speak unacceptably is to take up an alignment that falls outside this space." In this way, interactive norms shape and constrain mass-mediated communication.

These kinds of norms constitute the focus of the present study. This study suggests that the "talk" of talk radio may be viewed in terms of a self-organizing system (Prigogine, 1980; Contractor, 1994). Put simply, self-organizing systems theory (or SOST) studies how patterned behavior emerges in systems that are initially in a state of disorganization. Applied to the study of social systems, SOST suggests that coordinated social activity organizes itself around individuals' shared interpretations of social rules and resources. SOST thus has theoretical similarities to Burt's (1982) structural theory of action, Giddens' (1979, 1984) theory of structuration, and Suchman's

(1987) theory of situated action.

How might SOST relate to the study of talk radio? Hutchby (1992) offers some insight in his discussion of "routine skepticism" in British talk programs:

> On talk radio, disputation is both ad hoc and outright. Hosts have little idea, prior to the caller's beginning to speak, of the possible contents of any particular call. Consequently, if they want to construct arguments in pursuit of the kind of "controversial" talk for which many talk radio broadcasts are notorious, they will have to closely monitor callers' accounts for possible arguables. At the same time, having located such features, the argument must be developed overtly and rapidly, given that hosts are working within a particular economy of broadcasting time in the space of which a large number of callers have to be dealt with. (p. 689)

In this example, talk organizes itself around hosts' and callers' shared interpretations of the norms of talk radio. They do not know in advance how any one conversation will proceed; each conversation literally develops out of an initial state of disorganization. But the host "knows" that he or she is supposed to generate controversy quickly and efficiently by picking an argument, just as callers "know" that this is what the host is supposed to do. The callers in turn "know" that they are merely supposed to express and defend their opinions; the host "knows" this as well. These are the "rules of the game," reified and reinforced via the ongoing interactions on the program. Even played within these rules, however, the game can take unexpected twists and turns to which the participants then must react; on occasion, rules may be challenged or even broken.

Viewed from an SOST perspective, talk radio is every bit as complex and contradictory as Munson (1993) suggests that it is. Rather than uniformly promoting interpersonal contact for social isolates or uniformly promoting the interests either of democracy or demagoguery, talk radio may do any, all, or none of these things, depending on the established norms governing conversation and the way in which conversation develops around those norms. Since talk can organize itself in a multitude of ways, talk radio can have a multitude of potential uses and effects.

However, organizational and institutional factors may significantly constrain the organization of radio talk and the establishment and evolution of norms. In the example just discussed, Hutchby (1992, p. 689) notes that hosts have to work "within a particular economy of broadcasting time"--eventually, they must halt the conversation for the next program break. Radio stations operating within a commercial broadcasting system must generate revenue. Commercials bring in advertising dollars, and other regular program elements like news and weather reports help attract listeners. Indeed, radio hosts are confrontational and controversial on the air primarily to build audiences for the stations that air them (Bell, 1982; Seib, 1993; Laufer, 1995). Other constraints may come into play--government regulations limiting certain kinds of radio talk (Munson, 1993, pp. 48-49), or the constraints imposed by the organizational culture of a radio station.

These sorts of constraints have long been the focus of sociological studies of the mass media. Such studies have examined how media communicators and organizations accomplish work and construct news, information, and entertainment within the limitations just discussed (Schudson, 1991; see also Epstein, 1974; Altheide, 1976; Tuchman, 1978; Fishman, 1980; Ettema & Whitney, 1982; Gallagher, 1982; Turow, 1984; Bantz, 1985; Schlesinger, 1987; Ehrlich, 1995). Recent studies have paid particular attention to the normative relationships between the mass media and audiences--that is, how a media organization constructs and make sense of the audience it is trying to reach, and how in turn audience members use media technologies and texts in making sense of their world (Ettema & Whitney, 1994; Bell, 1991, chap. 6).

The case study of J.C. and KMOX was approached with a theoretical framework drawing upon both SOST and media sociology. Again, it was known that J.C.'s challenge would be to develop a "creative and spontaneous presentation" within the constraints imposed by KMOX's "rigid skeleton of news and information," specifically during the 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. weekday time slot in which his program would air. That was a period in which the station traditionally had devoted substantial time to news, sports, weather, traffic, and business updates.

It was also known that J.C. would have to challenge successfully the established rules or norms adhered to by many of KMOX's staff and listeners, who believed in a "public service" mission for the station (Munson, 1993, p. 38). J.C. had made on-air wisecracks about KMOX when he had worked for other St. Louis stations in the past; among other things, he had referred to "At Your Service"--a show hosted by longtime KMOX host Anne Keefe--as "At Your Cervix." Because of this, some at the station objected to J.C.'s hiring, including Keefe. When J.C. joined KMOX in March 1993, she called his earlier remarks about her and the station "erroneous and horrid," and said his arrival marked a fundamental "shift in the way KMOX operates." Coincidentally or not, she also announced that she would be retiring the following November, lamenting that "times have changed so. Vulgarity is in" (Hoffman, 1993, p. 1; Holleman, 1993, p. 1A; Berger, 1993, p. 1D). Still, she would be working at KMOX for several months at the same time as J.C., with a program that immediately preceded his. And many of her fans and other KMOX listeners also were protesting J.C.'s hiring.

In short, J.C. faced a difficult task, and this study sought to discover how successful he would be in accomplishing it. J.C.'s and KMOX's cooperation were not formally enlisted for this project. (KMOX's program director consented to speak for the station at the end of the study; J.C. did not return repeated phone calls.) Nor was a formal test of SOST or any other theory or hypotheses attempted--the project was explicitly approached as an exploratory case study.

Method

J.C. went on the air on KMOX on March 15, 1993, and taping of his program began the following week. On several afternoons, his show was preempted by baseball games; a couple of programs also were not taped due to equipment failure. 35 programs in all were recorded, ending in the last week of May.

On May 28, 1993, J.C. was fired. Station manager Rod Zimmerman announced on the air that J.C. had been dismissed due to "philosophical differences in the direction of his program and the station in general" (Eardley & Berger, 1993, p. 1A). While Zimmerman did not elaborate, speculation centered on an article that had just appeared in the St. Louis Business Journal under the headline "Corcoran Chafes at KMOX." In the article, J.C. complained that he was not getting enough air time between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m., adding that if KMOX's managers "don't do what they told me they were going to do when they hired me, they're asking for trouble." He also was quoted as calling Anne Keefe "senile" (Lerner, 1993, p. 1A).

With J.C.'s abrupt departure, this study was left with a fairly comprehensive record of the life span of his show. Each day's program was transcribed and broken down into "chunks"--program segments in which J.C. spoke. A "chunk" ended when J.C. went to a commercial, and began when he returned from a commercial. There were 738 chunks in all within the 35 programs.

Each chunk was coded according to a 56-item scheme that was inductively developed after a preliminary scan of the transcripts of the programs. Items included information about time (the clock times that chunks started and ended), demographics (whether J.C. was talking by himself or with others--callers, guests, other station staffers, etc.), continuity (whether topics, callers, guests, etc. were carried over from one chunk to the next), orientation (whether J.C. offered an "agenda" or some definite idea of what he wanted to talk about in a current or future chunk), interactions (whether J.C. explicitly agreed or disagreed with callers, guests, etc., whether he "ribbed" or outright insulted them, and whether they in turn did the same things in interacting with him), written communication (whether J.C. referred to something written about the show in a newspaper article or in a letter or fax to the station, and if so, how he referred to it), and finally, conversational norms (whether J.C. made explicit remarks concerning his own performance or the "rules" of the show--telling a caller or listener "you can't say that," or saying "We're flying by the seat of our pants today").

Coding results were analyzed using the SPSS statistical package (Norusis & SPSS, 1991) by chunk and by day. This helped determine statistically significant trends both within individual programs and over the lifespan of J.C.'s show. It also helped isolate significant correlations among various interactions that may have been taking place within a given chunk or a given day.

Results

Analysis of the transcripts supports J.C.'s claims that he had limited time in which to talk and interact during the last two hours of his program (which fell during afternoon "drive time," one of the most heavily listened-to times of the day). During the 3 p.m. hour, the average length of a "chunk" (that is, a program segment uninterrupted by a commercial break) was 5 minutes 26 seconds; during the 4 p.m. hour it was 4 minutes 8 seconds, and during the 5 p.m. hour it was 4 minutes 2 seconds. These numbers, however, do not fully represent the constraints placed upon J.C. between 4 and 6 p.m.; many times, all he did within a chunk was introduce a traffic and/or weather report. In fact, the phrase "traffic and weather together" was a KMOX promotional catchphrase, to remind listeners that they could hear the two reports back-to-back at numerous set times during the afternoon.

As days went by, J.C. began to show covert signs of frustration with this on the air: "And now, as they say, 'traffic and weather together'." Or, after previewing something he had planned for an upcoming segment: "But first--there's always a 'but first'--traffic and weather together." Or, several times in feigned surprise after numerous interruptions from news, weather, traffic, sports, business, etc.: "My turn again already?" Once he went so far as to call his program "the Julie Niemann show, co-starring Kathy Hartley" (after the station's on-air market analyst and traffic reporter, respectively).

Table 1 and Table 2 about here

The effects of the rigidly scheduled news-talk format on

J.C.'s program also can be seen in demographic data (see Table 1, Section A). In more than three-quarters of the chunks, J.C. was merely talking by himself or with other on-air staffers (that is, the weather person, traffic person, sports person, etc.). Guests and listener-callers--those persons who would seem most likely to help J.C. fashion the kind of "creative and spontaneous" show he claimed he was hired to do--appeared in barely a quarter of the chunks. When they did appear, they tended not to be on the air for very long; in 62.4% of the cases in which a guest was featured, he or she was limited to a single chunk (which again averaged only 4-5 minutes in length). Meanwhile, no listener-caller was ever carried over from one chunk to the next.

This all seemed to have an impact on J.C.'s ability to put his unique stamp on the program. If J.C. was considered a "shock jock" prior to his arrival at KMOX, he certainly was not very "shocking" once he arrived. There were relatively few examples of him explicitly disagreeing with someone else on the air (i.e., "constructing controversy"), and even fewer examples of him insulting someone else (see Table 1, Sections B-D). The study made a distinction between insults and "ribbing" or teasing. In nearly a quarter of the chunks in which J.C. interacted with other on-air staff, he ribbed them (much as television news anchor teams often exchange good-natured "banter" during a newscast). But probably not surprisingly, J.C. never insulted a staffer while they were on the air together. And staffers interacted similarly with J.C., although they ribbed him less often than he ribbed them (see Table 2, Section A). Since staffers were on the air with J.C. so frequently to begin with, this seemed to help moderate the overall tone of the program, more in line with the established sound and norms of KMOX than with J.C.'s trademark abrasive style.

With guests, it was not much different. On a very few occasions, J.C. did try to "mix it up" by explicitly disagreeing with something a guest had said, but with only one exception (to be discussed later), he never insulted one; guests responded similarly to him, and in fact explicitly agreed with him nearly a third of the time (see Table 1, Section C; Table 2, Section B). J.C.'s interactions with listener-callers were somewhat more negative in tone. The study shows that on days in which J.C. took calls, there was a positive correlation ($p<.05$) with the callers explicitly disagreeing with J.C. and with J.C. ignoring statements made by the callers; there was also a negative correlation ($p<.05$) with the callers explicitly agreeing with J.C. But Tables 1 and 2 reveal that of the 40 chunks in which J.C. took calls, there were only three total in which he insulted callers, and only two in which they insulted him in return (and again, this was out of a grand total of 738 chunks).

The most notable interactions that could be described as confrontational took place not between J.C. and someone who was on the air with him at the same time, but between J.C. and writers--those who wrote articles about him, or who wrote or faxed messages to KMOX concerning him and his program. While J.C.

referred to writers in only 18 total chunks, he disagreed with and/or ribbed and/or insulted the writers on several occasions within these chunks (see Table 1, Section E). Furthermore, he often did this at the very start of his program. Once early in his tenure at KMOX, J.C. began this way:

> One of these days, we're gonna be able to start the show without hate mail. . . . All I have to do is go to my mailbox, and then I know I have something to start the show with. I think we are going to address some of you, perhaps individually.

J.C. then read a letter from a 75-year-old woman who said that she had been listening to KMOX for 50 years, and that J.C. had "trashed afternoon drive time beyond redemption." On this occasion, J.C. refrained from directly insulting the writer. On a program the following week, however, he referred to "professional letter writers out there who have no lives and really nothing better to do." References in subsequent programs to letters and faxes continued in much the same vein, with J.C. quoting from so-called "hate mail" and then often "zinging" the author.

Perhaps the single most confrontational incident on the air with a writer or anyone else during J.C.'s tenure at KMOX came on April 1, his third week at the station. J.C. delivered a 7-minute monologue attacking a suburban newspaper. The paper had published an anonymous letter which blasted KMOX for hiring J.C. and accused the station of "catering to male macho chauvinism." J.C. called the article "the creepiest, meanest, most outrageous thing

I think I've ever seen printed," adding that when he had confronted the newspaper's publishers, they had told him that the letter had been delivered to them by an KMOX staffer:

> We found out who it was. The person responsible for this creepy, hateful, mean, deliberately misleading letter, designed only to be damaging, is a person who worked here about a hundred years ago. . . . The fact that I am here is driving some people crazy; there are a lot of people who cannot handle it. So all they can try to do is dirty up what it is we try to do in here every day. . . . Who's right? The people who know me, or some of these ridiculous people with these axes to grind? Who's got the greater likelihood of being wrong? And don't flood the station with opinions of what you think about what I just said, because I really don't care what you think.

However, this sort of incident was the exception rather than the rule. Four days later, while again reading listener mail on the air, J.C. quoted one correspondent who enthusiastically praised him for his attack on the newspaper and who said: "Go J.C. Go! You're back!" J.C. thanked the writer, but then added:

> Yeah, a lot of people thought that I was doing that because I wanted to sound like I sounded like in the old days, yellin' and screamin' at people, but that really wasn't the reason. I was really mad. Not any more, though--can't get mad about something stupid like that.

J.C. often used letters in this way--as an opportunity to engage in sort of a running commentary concerning his performance and the show. In fact, he did this quite often during the program, not just in response to letters.

Table 3 about here

Table 3, Section A shows that in nearly one out of every five chunks, J.C. made some sort of reference to himself and/or the program. Slightly more than 18 percent of these self-references were positive in tone, some to the point of self-aggrandizement:

> I take great pride in being perhaps the one breath of fresh air [on this station]. . . . If you would like to be dead serious, don't let me stop ya. However, if you'd like to have some fun, listen to the show from 3 to 6, 'cause that's what we try to do. . . . And of course one big fat guy, who's doing talk radio coast to coast right now, Mr. Cholesterol, is certainly proving that you don't have to be dead serious to do talk radio [Rush Limbaugh, of course]. So please, some of you out there, I think you know it's the '90s--I'm just not sure all of you know it's the 1990s.

Here, J.C. clearly seemed to be trying to establish new norms on behalf of his program, while challenging the existing "dead[ly] serious" norms of KMOX. He did this more than once on the air, although sometimes he did so in a less boastful and in a more "neutral," conciliatory fashion:

> For these 3 hours a day, we're just trying to do a few things

> a little bit differently. Not radically different; it's still going to fit into the overall profile of what KMOX is all about. But we're going to try to do things a little bit different and for people who don't like it, you got the same radio station you had _21_ hours a day, at least for now.

But as Table 3 shows, the biggest percentage of references that J.C. made to himself or the program were _negative_ in tone. If J.C. was relatively benign toward others on the air (with the occasional exceptions discussed above), he could be hard on himself and his show--scolding himself for getting mad about "something stupid," for example. The rapid transitions between various elements of the news-talk format led to technical foul-ups which J.C. would then comment upon sardonically: "[With] a look at the roads, here's Kathy Hartley--who's probably not around yet, but I bet ya if I waited about another, oh, 15, 20 seconds and killed and stalled--oh boy, we're a well-oiled machine today!" And more than once, J.C. began a program with a comment like this one: "Do you want to see some seat-of-the-pants broadcasting? Wow, are you going to see some today! . . . We have all these plates spinning at the tops of the sticks, like on the old Ed Sullivan show." These sorts of comments may have been intended for comedic effect (Goffman, 1981, chap. 5), or to try to soften his "yellin' and screamin'" image. But often they seemed to result from inexperience and frustration with the format that was constraining him from doing the "different" kind of program that he wanted to do.

J.C. did appear to become somewhat more organized and to exert somewhat more control over the program as he approached the end of his tenure at KMOX. The study shows a positive correlation ($p<.01$) between program date and J.C. offering an agenda for what he wanted to talk about during a segment. That is, as days went by, J.C. was more likely to state explicitly what the topic of conversation was going to be or which direction he wanted to take; he was less likely to go by the "seat of the pants."

However, the study also suggests how he was able to accomplish this--as days went by, there was a significantly positive trend ($p<.05$) toward J.C. making positive references toward guests and toward the guests explicitly agreeing with him, while there was a significantly negative trend ($p<.01$) away from J.C. taking callers. In short, J.C. became more friendly with guests and cut down on the (already infrequent) number of on-air listener calls. He seemed to be taking more control of the program by moving it even more toward the established, non-confrontational format for which KMOX was known, and away from the kind of riskier, less predictable talk radio format that featured provocative interviews with guests and plenty of listener input.

J.C. did experiment early on with both guests and callers (see Table 3, Sections C-D). In addition to "fun" interviews with everyone from Burt Reynolds to Mrs. Fields of cookie fame, J.C. tried interviewing more controversial guests. On at least one occasion, this backfired on him. The guest (by phone) was a college student who had exercised what he believed was his constitutional right to engage in public nudity. When J.C. asked him about this, the guest began to reply: "Normally students wear shirts that say 'Fuck Constitutional Law,' in reference to a famous case in which a person was indicted for wearing a shirt that said 'Fuck the Draft'." J.C. responded: "This is going to be the shortest interview you ever had in your life." He then promptly ended the conversation, calling the guest a "potty mouth." (This was the one example of J.C. insulting a guest.)

Clearly, this was a case in which a guest had violated norms, and J.C. had enforced those norms. At other times, however, J.C. seemed to test the rules governing what could be said and not said. Once he played a clip of a comedy routine from Tim Allen in which Allen made some reference to "nipples." Later in the program, J.C. noted that people were calling the station to complain about the clip. He mocked the callers, telling them to "get a life," and repeating the word "nipple" over the next several minutes. Finally, toward the end of the program, J.C. announced: "I have been asked no longer to say what I will now have to refer to on the air as, believe it or not, the N-word. Oh, man! . . . My spirit has been broken." Here, it was J.C. who had violated the norms of KMOX. "Spirit broken" or not, he found himself forced to respect those norms. And as days went by, his attempts to provoke controversy via guests or other means appeared to become less frequent.

This also applied to listener-callers. As Table 3 shows, J.C. was more apt to remark about norms or rules of interaction with callers than he was with guests or staffers. However, the biggest problem with callers was not language, but time--there simply was not enough time between the constant program breaks to develop much of a discussion. Once during the tightly-formatted 5 p.m. hour, J.C. suddenly announced that he wanted to "do something here that I think I want to start doing from time to time"--an "open line": "Try to make your point in 10 to 15 seconds and we can maybe get 20 people in less than 5 minutes. So don't rant and rave and go on forever--that's my job!" He then took calls, abruptly cutting off those who went on for more than the allotted 10-15 seconds, and praising those who were more succinct ("Very well stated. You people are doing this very well"). At the start of the 7th call, the phones abruptly went dead. J.C.: "We may have broken the phones. Too many calls may have come in. . . . But it was fun." It was also the last time J.C. tried to do an "open line" in that particular format.

J.C. finally did himself in with the interview in which he warned of "trouble" if KMOX did not change the format of his show and in which he called Anne Keefe "senile." He and Keefe reportedly had been having an off-air feud, to which J.C. occasionally made veiled on-air references. At the beginning of his program on May 10, J.C. told his audience that despite the controversy surrounding his arrival at KMOX, everyone was "gettin' along fine" at the station now, adding: "Oh, there's one or two exceptions--but they'll be gone soon." (To repeat, Keefe had announced that she would retire soon.) On Friday, May 14, the day after an incident in which Keefe had appeared on a television panel show and publicly criticized J.C., he signed off his program as follows:

> Guess what happened today? We wrapped up two months [on the air]. Did it while nobody was lookin'. And I just want to say thanks to everybody here at KMOX. Everybody here on the air, we're having a great time, everybody back in the offices. . . . There are some people who aren't with the program. Two out of 60? Ain't bad. Don't buy into the poison that is being spread by one or two very bitter, hateful people. Hey, don't let it ruin your weekend. We gotta go. . . .

Two weeks later, J.C. was gone for good.

Discussion

The limitations of this case study should be clear; the findings are not necessarily generalizable to other talk programs hosted by other personalities on other radio stations. Nor did J.C.'s brief employment at KMOX offer much time to examine how conversational norms evolved on his program. Nevertheless, this study offers a unique look at the talk on a single radio show from its inception to its demise. It also presents a scheme for comparative studies of talk radio, particularly the factors that can constrain the evolution of talk within the format:

Constraints of Format. KMOX's traditional format, with its frequent interruptions for news and other information breaks, seemed to limit J.C.'s ability to establish norms around which creative talk could organize and evolve. Even under the best of circumstances, talk hosts have to operate within format constraints. As Munson (1993, p. 45) suggests, the "perilous unpredictability" of talk radio must be contained to a greater or lesser extent in order to prevent talk programs from disintegrating into chaos. Although KMOX program director Tom Langmyer said J.C. helped design his own show and knew exactly how his time would be structured (personal communication, May 4, 1994), J.C. still did not seem to be able to carve out enough time and space within the format to do the kind of program he wanted. Some time after KMOX had fired him and he had joined another local station, J.C. put together a show featuring recorded highlights of his decade in St. Louis radio. He quipped that he had "about 7,000 highlights" from his time at KMOX, "but they're all of me introducing traffic and weather together" (Berger, 1994, p. 1D).

Constraints of Organizational Culture. The traditional culture at KMOX--as represented by Anne Keefe--had firm ideas of what talk radio's mission should be, as did many of the station's listeners. They believed in a "public service" model of radio (Munson, 1993, p. 38) as opposed to the entertainment-oriented "hot talk" model epitomized by Limbaugh, Stern, and J.C. Clashes between professional and entertainment values are routine within many media organizations and can influence media content (Bantz, 1985). In this case, the professional values adhered to by KMOX's traditional culture apparently "won." Even though KMOX had hired J.C. with the goal of reshaping its audience along younger lines, and even if J.C. was right in claiming that only a few station staffers opposed him, he still had to confront established rules compelling polite, civilized talk on the air, rules which he challenged at his peril (by saying the "N-word," for example). And J.C.'s public attacks on Keefe sealed his fate. Program director Tom Langmyer noted that J.C. "spoke out very vehemently about a lot of the other air talent, which wasn't very smart," adding that J.C. might have experienced some "culture shock" coming to KMOX (personal communication).

Constraints of Talk Itself. While format and organizational culture are external constraints on radio talk, talk also exerts its own constraints. That is, hosts, guests, and callers have limited "frame spaces" to work within, as Goffman (1981, p. 230) puts it. Although these frame spaces are influenced by organizational and institutional factors, they are also shaped by interactive norms and rituals. Each party on the air has an assigned role to play according to certain rules. For example, J.C. asserted on the air that he could "rant and rave and go on forever," but listeners could not; just as Hutchby (1992) noted in his study of "routine skepticism" in talk radio, hosts and callers come to know their "parts" well via their ongoing conversation on the air, even if occasionally they have to be reminded to stay in character. Furthermore, Goffman (1981, p. 319) argues that the specific kinds of talk that participants engage in on the radio are themselves "extremely well patterned, extremely stereotyped," and that "many are common to talk in general." J.C.'s sardonic comments concerning the technical errors on his program were typical of the "verbal and expressive rituals" which Goffman says radio hosts usually resort to when something goes wrong on the air.

In short, if the talk on talk radio is to some extent self-organizing, it is also self-constraining. Hosts and others have some freedom in deciding which "moves" to make while interacting with each other, but "each move is selected from a limited and predetermined framework" (Goffman, 1981, p. 326). And the more that talk radio participants adhere to the limited set of norms governing their interactions, the more they reinforce those norms, making it harder for talk to evolve and organize itself in fresh, unpredictable ways. By the end of J.C.'s time at KMOX, the conversational norms on his program appeared to have evolved and solidified into a pattern stressing friendly interactions with guests and a sharply limited role for listener-callers. That seemed to give him more control over the program than he had when he first went on the air, since the program had become more predictable. Yet the solidification of those norms also seemed to make it harder for him to produce the riskier and more creative program that he originally had envisaged.

Conclusion

This case study has tried to contribute to our understanding of talk radio by calling attention to certain constraints on radio talk. A host's ability to shape talk on his or her program may be restricted by factors including format, organizational culture, and the interactive norms which evolve through talk itself. These factors should be considered in future debates and studies concerning the power of talk radio personalities to do harm or good.

This study also has tried to contribute to electronic media scholarship by synthesizing research in interpersonal and organizational communication (specifically self-organizing systems theory) with research in mass communication (specifically the sociology of mass media production). SOST remains a useful perspective for examining talk radio and emerging forms of two-way media. It reminds us that such unscripted, interactive communication has at least the potential of developing in any number of different directions, with much depending upon various parties' shared interpretations of the mutually constituted and negotiated norms governing communication.

But media sociology reminds us that organizational and institutional factors may significantly constrain the organization of talk and other forms of interactive, mediated communication Consequently, research should continue on the ways in which creative communication may or may not be able to organize itself within such constraints, and how this ongoing tension between creativity and constraint may influence the uses and effects of existing and emerging media.

Notes

1. Because all information and data gathered here were clearly "on the record," the specific station and personalities involved have been identified.

Table 1
Interactions from J.C. to Others by "Chunk"

(NOTE: "Chunks" refer to segments in which J.C. spoke, beginning when he returned from a commercial break and ending when he went to the next commercial break. Percentages below may add up to more or less than 100% due to multiple interactions taking place at once or some not taking place at all.)

A.	J.C. BY HIMSELF:	284 of 738 chunks	(38.5%)
	J.C. WITH STAFFERS:	296 of 738 chunks	(40.1%)
	J.C. WITH GUESTS:	149 of 738 chunks	(20.2%)
	J.C. WITH CALLERS:	40 of 738 chunks	(5.4%)
B.	J.C. AGREES W. STAFFERS:	44 of 296 chunks	(14.9%)
	J.C. DISAGREES W. STAFFERS:	7 of 296 chunks	(2.4%)
	J.C. RIBS STAFFERS:	70 of 296 chunks	(23.6%)
	J.C. INSULTS STAFFERS:	0 of 296 chunks	(0.0%)
	J.C. RIBS AND INSULTS STAFFERS:	0 of 296 chunks	(0.0%)
C.	J.C. AGREES W. GUESTS:	28 of 149 chunks	(18.8%)
	J.C. DISAGREES W. GUESTS:	5 of 149 chunks	(3.4%)
	J.C. RIBS GUESTS:	19 of 149 chunks	(12.8%)
	J.C. INSULTS GUESTS:	0 of 149 chunks	(0.0%)
	J.C. RIBS AND INSULTS GUESTS:	1 of 149 chunks	(0.7%)
D.	J.C. AGREES W. CALLERS:	7 of 40 chunks	(17.5%)
	J.C. DISAGREES W. CALLERS:	4 of 40 chunks	(10.0%)
	J.C. RIBS CALLERS:	6 of 40 chunks	(15.0%)
	J.C. INSULTS CALLERS:	2 of 40 chunks	(5.0%)
	J.C. RIBS AND INSULTS CALLERS:	1 of 40 chunks	(2.5%)
E.	J.C. REFERS TO SOMETHING WRITTEN ABOUT SHOW (LETTERS, FAXES, NEWS ARTICLES, ETC.):	18 of 738 chunks	(2.5%)
	J.C. AGREES WITH WRITER:	1 of 18 chunks	(5.6%)
	J.C. DISAGREES WITH WRITER:	5 of 18 chunks	(27.8%)
	J.C. RIBS WRITER:	4 of 18 chunks	(22.2%)
	J.C. INSULTS WRITER:	3 of 18 chunks	(16.7%)
	J.C. RIBS AND INSULTS WRITER:	2 of 18 chunks	(11.1%)

Table 2
Interactions from Others to J.C. by "Chunk"

(NOTE: "Chunks" refer to segments in which J.C. spoke, beginning when he returned from a commercial break and ending when he went to the next commercial break. Percentages below may add up to more or less than 100% due to multiple interactions taking place at once or some not taking place at all.)

A.	STAFFERS AGREE W. J.C.:	73 of 296 chunks	(24.7%)
	STAFFERS DISAGREE W. J.C.:	16 of 296 chunks	(5.4%)
	STAFFERS RIB J.C.:	32 of 296 chunks	(10.8%)
	STAFFERS INSULT J.C.:	0 of 296 chunks	(0.0%)
	STAFFERS RIB AND INSULT J.C.:	0 of 296 chunks	(0.0%)
B.	GUESTS AGREE WITH J.C.:	49 of 149 chunks	(32.9%)
	GUESTS DISAGREE WITH J.C.:	17 of 149 chunks	(11.4%)
	GUESTS RIB J.C.:	10 of 149 chunks	(6.7%)
	GUESTS INSULT J.C.:	0 of 149 chunks	(0.0%)
	GUESTS RIB AND INSULT J.C.:	0 of 149 chunks	(0.0%)
C.	CALLERS AGREE WITH J.C.:	8 of 40 chunks	(20.0%)
	CALLERS DISAGREE WITH J.C.:	7 of 40 chunks	(17.5%)
	CALLERS RIB J.C.:	0 of 40 chunks	(0.0%)
	CALLERS INSULT J.C.:	2 of 40 chunks	(5.0%)
	CALLERS RIB AND INSULT J.C.:	0 of 40 chunks	(0.0%)

Table 3
J.C. Discussing Norms by "Chunk"

(NOTE: "Chunks" refer to segments in which J.C. spoke, beginning when he returned from a commercial break and ending when he went to the next commercial break. Percentages below may add up to more or less than 100% due to multiple interactions taking place at once or some not taking place at all.)

A. J.C. REMARKED ABOUT STYLE OR NORMS OF TALK RADIO W. RESPECT TO HIMSELF AND/OR THE PROGRAM:	142 of 738 chunks (19.2%)
POSITIVE REMARKS:	26 of 142 chunks (18.3%)
NEGATIVE REMARKS:	62 of 142 chunks (43.7%)
NEUTRAL REMARKS:	38 of 142 chunks (26.8%)
NEGATIVE AND NEUTRAL:	8 of 142 chunks (5.6%)
NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE:	8 of 142 chunks (5.6%)

B. J.C. REMARKED ABOUT STYLE OR NORMS OF TALK RADIO W. RESPECT TO STAFFERS (296 CHUNKS TOTAL W. STAFFERS):

REMARKS OF ANY KIND:	18 of 296 chunks (6.0%)
POSITIVE REMARKS:	11 of 296 chunks (3.7%)
NEGATIVE REMARKS:	2 of 296 chunks (0.7%)
NEUTRAL REMARKS:	5 of 296 chunks (1.7%)

C. J.C. REMARKED ABOUT STYLE OR NORMS OF TALK RADIO W. RESPECT TO GUESTS (149 CHUNKS TOTAL W. GUESTS):

REMARKS OF ANY KIND:	11 of 149 chunks (7.4%)
POSITIVE REMARKS:	5 of 149 chunks (3.4%)
NEGATIVE REMARKS:	3 of 149 chunks (2.0%)
NEUTRAL REMARKS:	3 of 149 chunks (2.0%)

D. J.C. REMARKED ABOUT STYLE OR NORMS OF TALK RADIO W. RESPECT TO CALLERS (40 CHUNKS TOTAL W. CALLERS):

REMARKS OF ANY KIND:	7 of 40 chunks (17.5%)
POSITIVE REMARKS:	3 of 40 chunks (7.5%)
NEGATIVE REMARKS:	6 of 40 chunks (15.0%)
NEUTRAL REMARKS:	0 of 40 chunks (0.0%)

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Running head: PERSONALITY AND TV VIEWING GRATIFICATIONS

"In Search Of ...": Assessing the relationship among "Big 5" personality traits, program choice, and gratifications obtained from watching television programs.

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Abstract

A correlational study was designed to assess the relationship among five personality traits, exposure to, and gratifications obtained from watching television programs. The main objective of the study was to determine if personality traits are associated with program choice and gratifications obtained from watching ten various television programs. Two hundred and eighty-nine respondents participated in this study. Questionnaires were used to gather information about the participant's exposure to and gratifications acquired from watching nightly/world news shows, soap operas, music videos, situation comedies, magazine shows, real-life drama shows, talk shows, sports, television movies, and one-hour drama programs. Digman's "Big 5" 50-item personality scale was used to determine personality traits. The data obtained in this study suggest that a relationship exists among the extroversion/introversion, agreeable, conscientious, and emotional personality traits, and gratifications obtained from watching television. The results are discussed in context of developing future research as well as the implications for network programmers, advertisers, and mass communication researchers and theorists.

INTRODUCTION

Assessing the relationship among Big 5 personality traits, program choice, and gratifications obtained from viewing television programs.

With so many different types of television channels and options, network audiences have become fragmented. Television programs like news shows, situation comedies, soap operas, and talk shows, just to name a few, appeal to different viewers. Some viewers watch and/or are loyal to CNN or other news programs, while other viewers watch and/or are loyal viewers of soap operas. To what extent can regular viewers of particular TV programs be distinguished by their personality? That is, what type of person tends to be more likely to watch certain television programs and what are the gratifications, if any, obtained from viewing the shows? This study examined the relationship among personality and program choice to determine whether psychological origins (i.e., individual differences) are associated with viewing gratifications.

The "Big 5" Personality Traits

Research on personality traits started with Cattell (Schultz, 1990). Cattell's main purpose in studying personality traits was to predict the behavior of an individual in response to certain situations (Cattell, 1965). Research concerning the existence or "nonexistence" of personality traits continues to flourish today. Controversy among personality theorists, however, centers on the "exact" number of source traits. Fortunately, studies in the field of personality have repeatedly confirmed the existence of at least five dispositional traits (Cattell, 1965; Digman & Inouye, 1986; Goldberg, 1980; Liebert & Spiegler, 1990; McCrae & Costa, 1987, Noller, Law, & Comrey, 1987). This five-factor model of personality traits has been called the "Big Five" or the "Five Robust Factors of Personality" (Digman, 1990; Digman & Inouye, 1986).

A 50-item scale was developed to assess the five factors of personality (Digman, 1990; Costa & McCrae, 1988). The 50-item scale has reported reliability coefficients ranging from

.84 to .89 (Digman, 1990; Costa & McCrae, 1988). The five robust factors of personality included in the present study are extroversion/introversion, openness, agreeableness/hostility, conscientiousness or a "will to achieve," and emotionality/emotional disorganization, also known as neuroticism (Digman & Inouye, 1986; McCrae & Costa, 1988).

Extroversion: Extroversion/introversion is, according to the research, one of the major dimensions of an individual's personality (Cattell, 1965; Digman, 1988; Costa & McCrae, 1988). Individuals high in extroversion tend to seek stimulation from their environment specifically to avoid being bored (Liebert & Spiegler, 1990). Unless their environment can provide the needed excitement and stimulation, arousal levels for an extrovert will tend to be low much of the time (Liebert & Spiegler, 1990). On the other hand, introverts shy away from stimulation and objects that will easily arouse them. Research on extroversion/introversion tends to support this behavioral description (Davis & Cowles, 1988).

Openness: Open individuals, according to the literature, tend to be extremely creative. According to McCrae and Costa (1987), openness in an individual manifests itself in a wide variety of ways, from creative or unusual ideas to a high degree of tolerance to what others may say, do, and toward people who think differently than they do.

Agreeableness: Research suggests that an individual with this personality trait tends to be trusting and interpersonally supportive (Liebert & Spiegler, 1990). An agreeable person is extremely cooperative while the "hostile" or "antagonistic" individual will exhibit self-minimizing and even rude behaviors when interacting with others. According to Liebert and Spiegler (1990), an antagonistic person "tends to be mistrustful, skeptical, unsympathetic, uncooperative, stubborn, and rude" (p. 221).

Eysenck (1975) also identified this underlying trait in human personality. He referred to the trait as *psychoticism.* "Psychotic" people are characterized by 11 dispositions (adapted from Liebert & Spiegler, 1990):

1. Solitary, not caring for people
2. Troublesome, not fitting in
3. Cruel, inhumane
4. Lacks feeling, insensitive
5. Sensation seeking, underaroused
6. Hostile to others, aggressive
7. Likes odd, unusual things
8. Disregards danger, foolhardy
9. Likes to make fools of other people, upsetting them
10. Opposes accepted social customs
11. Engages in little personal interaction

Conscientiousness: An individual high in conscientiousness is, according to Liebert and Spiegler (1990), "hardworking, ambitious, and energetic" (p. 221). "He or she perseveres in the face of difficulty and tends to be careful and thorough (Liebert & Spiegler, 1990, p. 221). An individual low in conscientiousness may be described simply as being "lazy" and unenergetic.

Emotionality/neuroticism: According to research on this personality trait, emotionality describes individuals who are "worrisome, insecure, self-conscious, and temperamental" (Liebert & Spiegler, 1990, p. 220). An individual who is high on this dimension will report being restless, fearful, impulsive, nervous, and tense (McCrae & Costa, 1985). Therefore, an individual with this disposition tends to be anxious and may withdraw from frustrating or overly stimulating situations (Liebert & Spiegler, 1990). According to Liebert & Spiegler, the lower people are in this trait, "the more meaning they find in life" (p. 220).

Uses and Gratifications of Viewing Television.

Uses and gratifications is a psychological perspective which stresses individual use and choice (Rubin, 1994). The uses and gratifications perspective of mass media considers media as a source of influence and its audience members as active seekers and communicators (Rubin, 1994). This theoretical approach shifts the focus from media effects to examining how people use the media. According to Rubin (1994), before researchers can understand media effects, "we must first understand audience motivation and behavior" (p. 418).

The uses and gratifications paradigm has three objectives: "(1) to explain how people use media to gratify their needs, (2) to understand motives for media behavior, and (3) to identify functions or consequences that follow from needs motives and behavior" (Rubin, 1994, p. 419). Figure 1 outlines the model for the uses and gratifications theory.

Insert Figure 1 about here

According to Figure 1, uses and gratifications focuses on these elements: (1) the social and psychological origins of (2) needs, which generate (3) expectations of (4) the mass media or other nonmedia sources, which leads to (5) differences in an individual media exposure or use, resulting in (6) need gratifications and various functions of the media (Rubin, 1994). Therefore, according to this perspective, an individual's values, beliefs, needs, and motives will affect media use and exposure as well as gratifications obtained from the mass media (Conway & Rubin, 1991).

According to Katz et al. (1973), friends, family, holidays, and even work, were found to be more important sources of gratifications. These researchers also found that individuals obtain different gratifications from different media. Learning and knowing oneself was best served, they found, by reading. Newspapers, they suggest, satisfy an individual's needs for status enhancement or "self-confidence." "Television," the researchers concluded, is useful for "killing time," and maintaining friendships and family solidarity. (Katz et al., 1973).

Researchers and uses and gratifications theorists frequently refer to at least six gratifications of media use: information (also known as surveillance/ or knowledge), escape, passing time, entertainment, social viewing/status enhancement, and relaxation gratifications (Greenberg, 1974; Rubin, 1983). Although the names for these gratifications may change, research in uses and gratifications of mass media continues to confirm that these six gratifications hold up in and across situations (Conway & Rubin, 1991; McGuire, 1974; Rubin, 1981; Rubin, 1986).

Psychological factors like personality traits and dispositions, according to Conway and Rubin (1991) moderate an individual's media exposure and the manner in which people respond to media content. Unfortunately, research examining psychological factors of television use is few and far between (Palmgreen, Wenner, & Rosengren, 1985). A study of personality traits and the psychological origins of media use, according to Conway and Rubin (1991), "should help explain why people use media the way they do" (p. 444).

Research on Gratifications of Television Programs.

Television soap operas and games shows, according to research, are related to relaxation, passing time, entertaining, and social viewing motives (Rubin & Rubin, 1982). In fact, in a study of uses of daytime television soap operas by college students, Rubin (1985) found four distinct motives for watching daytime serials: orientation, avoidance, diversion, and social utility.

Regular viewers of TV news shows, documentaries, and talk shows, on the other hand, identified information as an important viewing gratification of these programs (Rubin

& Rubin, 1982). Other studies have continued to confirm that news programs are fulfilling a need for information (e.g., Rubin & Perse, 1987).

It is possible to conclude that TV news programs are fulfilling information needs while programs such as soap operas, quiz shows, and magazine shows are satisfying viewer needs for entertainment, passing time, and escape.

Research Objective

This is a correlational study designed to identify personality characteristics of regular viewers of 10 television programs. The research question guiding this study was: Is there a relationship between personality and television viewing gratifications? The main objective is to determine whether psychological origins such as individual differences in personality affect and are related to television program choice and gratifications. The programs examined were local and national news, soap operas, music videos, situation comedies, television magazine shows, talk shows, sports shows, television movies and drama shows.

Based on the information provided about personality traits, uses and gratifications, and previous findings noted above, the following research questions were generated:

1. What relationship exists between the Big 5 personality traits, (extroversion, openness, agreeableness, emotionality, and conscientiousness) and the viewing gratifications, information, escape, passing time, entertainment, social viewing/status enhancement, and relaxation?
2. Is there a relationship between personality traits and program choice?
3. Is there a relationship between program choice and viewing gratifications?

4. Do programs fulfill all six gratifications (information, escape, relaxation, passing time, status enhancement, and entertainment) or are some programs fulfilling only one or two gratifications?

METHOD

Procedure

Questionnaires seem to be the most commonly used instrument in uses and gratifications research (refer to Bryant & Zillman, 1984; Christ & Medoff, 1984; Finn & Gorr, 1988; Katz et al., 1973; McGuire, 1974; Rubin, 1981; Rubin, 1985; Zillman & Bryant, 1985). Uses and gratifications research seeks to identify a relationship between an individual's psychological or emotional needs and the characteristic purposes individuals have for using certain media. When a study is concerned with identifying relationships between variables, according to Aronson, Ellsworth, Carlsmith, and Gonzales (1990), surveys or questionnaires are most appropriate. A questionnaire was used in this study and modeled after the instrument used in the Conway and Rubin (1991) study.

The study began early in November of 1994. The questionnaires, which took an average of 10 to 15 minutes for a participant to complete, measured viewing frequencies, demographic information, and gratifications of ten program types: news, soap operas, reality based news/drama shows, news magazine shows, music videos, one-hour drama shows, TV movies, sports shows/games, situation comedies, and television talk shows. The instrument also measured personality, using Digman's 50-item personality scale

The Sample

A convenience sample, consisting of 289 male and female volunteers, was used for this study. To increase the external validity of the study, a wide array of respondents with different backgrounds (e.g. levels of education, age, income, and ethnicity) were selected. Almost half of the data were collected from students attending a large southeastern university in exchange for extra credit in an undergraduate advertising course. The remaining data were collected from individuals in residential neighborhoods, faculty and staff at the Colleges of Journalism and Communication, Agriculture, and Education and employees of the Veteran's Administration Hospital. In most instances, the questionnaires were distributed by the principal investigator of the study. Each participant received written instructions and a 14-page questionnaire on which to record their responses. Respondents returned their completed questionnaire personally or by mail.

Conceptualizations and Operationalization of Constructs

The concepts/constructs involved in this study were: television program type, program choice, viewing gratifications, and personality traits. The following section will briefly explain and describe how these variables were conceptualized and operationalized.

TV programs: Program types included in this study were conceptualized in the following manner:[1]

1. Nightly news shows are any local or national news program.
2. Soap operas are those programs with continuing storylines such as those found in daytime serials like "All My Children[2]," "The Young and the Restless," and nighttime shows such as "Melrose Place," and "Beverly Hills 90210."
3. Music video programs are those TV shows or programs in which music videos are predominate (i.e. MTV or VH-1).
4. Situation comedies involve thirty minute programs such as "Seinfeld," "Murphy Brown," and "Home Improvement."
5. Television magazine shows are those "news entertainment" programs such as "Entertainment Tonight," "20/20," "Current Affair," "60 Minutes," and "Inside Edition."

6. Real-life drama shows were identified as programs that provided segments of real-life action or reenactments of real-life situations or crimes. These programs included but were not limited to "Cops," "Unsolved Mysteries," and "911."
7. Talk shows, for the purposes of this study, are programs in which a topic is discussed by panel participants, audience members, and a host. Examples are "Oprah," "Donahue," "Geraldo," and "Ricki Lake."
8. Sports shows are any show in which sports and reporting of game scores is the dominate topic. This category also included televised games and matches.
9. Television movies were defined as any "made for TV" movie as well as movies that appear on HBO and Showtime.
10. Drama shows involved one-hour programs such as "ER," "Law and Order," "The Commish," and "Picket Fences."

Program choice: Program choice refers to "the selection of specific television content across the range of available programming" (Webster & Wakshlag, 1985, p. 37). This definition of program choice helps to assess patterns of viewing as well as individual preferences for television content and programming. Program choice, for the purposes of this study, refers to the specific selection of a television program and frequent viewing of one program type over other types of programs.

Program choice in this study was measured by asking respondents to indicate how often they watch a program (1 = frequently, 2 = occasionally, 3 = never). Each participant indicated how often they watched nightly news shows, soap operas, music videos, situation comedies, television magazine shows, real-life drama shows, talk shows, sports shows, television movies, and drama shows.

Viewing gratifications. A primary objective of this study was to specifically identify the gratification(s) of viewing 10 various television programs. The gratifications included in this study were: information, entertainment, passing time, escape, relaxation, social/status enhancement.

Information gratifications refer to watching television to learn about oneself, others, and to learn about social issues and the world. Entertainment gratifications refer to watching television for the specific purpose of being aroused or stimulated. If one wishes to watch television to "calm down," a relaxation gratification is obtained.

Watching television for escape gratifications refers to using this medium as a means of diversion or for escapist purposes. This means that an individual specifically watches television to forget about problems and to get away from a task or friends/family. Closely resembling escape gratifications is the passing time motivation. There is one main distinction, however, between the escape and passing time gratifications.

Passing time refers to watching television because it is something to do and because it simply fills up the time. What distinguishes this gratification from escape is that it appears to be a more passive activity. That is, an individual does not specifically watch the program with the intent to 'get away" but watches television simply because there is nothing better to do, clearly a passive behavior.

And finally, status enhancement or social viewing gratifications refer to watching television specifically to aid in social interactions with others. This means that the information obtained from viewing television makes one feel better about oneself because it provides facts to back up opinions.

Measurement of the Gratifications

Information gratifications were measured by asking participants to respond to four statements (I watch the nightly or local news[3] because I learn how to do things, I learn what might happen to me, I learn about important issues and events, and I learn about myself and others). Entertainment gratifications were measured using five statements; " I watch soap operas because they entertain me," "they're dramatic," "they amuse me," "they're enjoyable," and "I just like to watch them." Status enhancement gratifications were measured using four statements (e.g. "I watch real-life drama shows because they give me facts to back up my opinions," "I can impress people," "I feel more important," and "they give me things to talk about with my family and friends.").

Four statements such as "I watch soap operas because they're on at that time," "it's something to occupy the time," "I have nothing better to do," and "they help to pass the time away" measured the passing time gratification. Escape gratifications were measured using three statements like "I watch soap operas to get away from what I am doing," "I watch music videos to get away from the rest of the family and others," and "it's something to do when family and friends come over." Lastly, relaxation was measured by using two statements (e.g. "they relax me," and "they allow me to unwind").

Twenty statements about gratifications for watching the television programs were taken from Rubin (1981) and Conway and Rubin (1991). The twenty statements were repeated for each program type. Respondents were asked to identify the gratifications for the 10 program types separately. For example, participants read the statement, "I watch television talk shows, because ..." and were asked to respond to the twenty statements, thinking only of that program type. After finishing the section for that program, respondents would proceed to the next section. This section included a different program type but the statements remained the same.

Response options ranged from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (4). Respondents who did not watch the program type were instructed to put a check in the box next to the statement, "I never watch ... shows," for example. The statements for each gratification were summed and averaged to obtain an overall assessment of the gratification(s).[5]

Personality traits: The 50-item questionnaire measuring the Big 5 personality traits was also employed in this study. After completing the 10 sections on program gratifications, participants were asked to identify which traits were "very much like them" from those that were not. Since the personality measure has been proven to be reliable across situations, a factor analysis of the items was not necessary.

Items measuring extroversion were: sociable, introversion, energetic, happy, outspoken, and unemotional. Agreeableness was measured using items such as jealous, touchy, spiteful, considerate, rude, assertive, complaining, and submissive. Conscientiousness was measured by computing the neat, careful, careless, irresponsible, eccentric, persevering, organize, mannerly, and conscientious items. Items measuring emotionality were: fickle, restless, impulsive, concerned, nervous, fearful, and tense. And, openness was measured by computing scores on the knowledgeable, perceptive, imaginative, verbal, original, curious, adaptable, sensible, socially confident, rigid, and sensitive items. For each trait, respondents indicated how much each adjective was 1 = very much like me to 6 = not at all like me.[6] Item scores, for each personality trait were added together to form an overall score.

Demographic information: Demographic information such as age, gender, occupation, and income were obtained by using open-ended items. Information concerning ethnic origin was also measured (1 = Caucasian, 2 = African-American, 3 = Asian, 4 = Indian, 5 = Hispanic, 6 = other). In addition, respondents were asked to indicate their educational level (1 = some high school, 2 = some college, 3 = undergraduate degree, 4 = some graduate work, 5 = graduate degree).

RESULTS

Since the objective of this study is to determine a relationship among personality traits and viewing gratifications, correlational analysis was performed on the data. Data were analyzed using the statistical program, SPSS/PC+, and the significance level was set at $p < .01$.

With a sample size as large as that employed in this study, very small correlations will achieve statistical significance. Also, doing correlations between ten different types of programs and five personality traits, as a reviewer of the article, suggested, will also increase the statistical possibility of finding relationships. Therefore, to be more conservative in interpreting the results, correlations that were significant at the .01 level and beyond were used. Using a criterion such as this for deciding which associations to point to should identify and distinguish more clearly the relationships that may exist between program choice and viewing gratifications. Correlation coefficients were computed to show the strength of the relationship among personality traits, program choice, and viewing gratifications.

The Respondents.

Of the 289 respondents, 133 were males (47%) and 148 were women (53%). The mean age for the same was 26 (SD = 9.9) with a range of 18 to 68 years. For level of education: high school, 2.1%; some college, 62.6%; undergraduate degree, 13.2%; some graduate school, 2.5%; and, graduate degree 17.8%. Occupations ranged from college student to lawyers, engineers, to sales, to policeman to supervisors and administrators. A large proportion of the sample was Caucasian, 83.1%. African-Americans represented 5.4%; Asians, 2.5%; Hispanics, 6.5% and people identifying themselves as "other," 2.5%.

Viewing Gratifications and the Big 5 Personality Traits

Data analysis revealed interesting findings between extroversion/introversion and gratifications of viewing various programs.[7] According to the data, individuals who did not consider or describe themselves as extroverted (i.e. introverts), reported information gratifications from viewing TV soap operas ($r = -.21$, $p < .01$) and status enhancement gratifications for viewing TV talk shows ($r = -.18$. [$< .01$). Yet, a positive relationship was found among extroversion and watching situation comedies for relaxation. Surprisingly, extroversion was also correlated highly with watching situation comedies for information. An interesting relationship likewise emerged between individuals who are not extroverted and watching music videos for information ($r = -.18$, $p < .01$) as well as for status enhancement ($r = -.18$, $p < .01$). Table 1 presents the overall results of the correlational analysis and the extroversion personality trait.

Insert Table 1 about here

Agreeableness: Several relationships were found between the agreeableness/hostile personality trait and viewing gratifications. A relationship was found, for example, between individuals who reported being "hostile" and viewing television situation comedies for information ($r =- .17$, $p < .01$), entertainment ($r = -.16$, $p < .01$), self enhancement ($r = -.22$, $p < .001$), passing time ($r = -.20$, $p < .001$), escape ($r = -.24$, $p < .001$), and relaxation ($r = -.15$, $p < .01$) gratifications. Table 2 presents the correlations for the other viewing gratifications and television programs. It appears that relationships are the strongest among agreeableness personality types and watching news, music videos, situation comedies, and television movies for passing time, status enhancement, escape, and relaxation gratifications.

Insert Table 2 about here

Openness: Very few significant correlations were found between the openness personality trait and the viewing gratifications. Surprisingly, a negative relationship was found between close-mindedness and watching news programs for entertainment ($r = -.19$, $p < .01$) and watching music videos for information ($r = -.19$, $p < .01$).

Conscientiousness: Several strong relationships were found between individuals who reported being "unenergetic" or low in conscientiousness. The significant findings of the correlational analysis are presented in Table 3. Conscientiousness, for example, was found to be highly correlated with watching news, soap operas, real-life dramas, sports, and television movies to pass time.

Insert Table 3 about here

Emotionality: Research on this trait suggests that emotional individuals are people who tend to be worrisome and temperamental while those individuals low in this trait, tend to find more meaning in life. Interestingly, positive relationships were found for escape gratifications for nine out of the ten programs investigated. As reflected in Table 4, positive relationships were found for personality dimension and information, status enhancement, passing time, relaxation, and escape gratifications. Apparently, emotionally stable people are finding many gratifications for watching television programs such as situation comedies, music videos, talk shows and television movies worthwhile.

Insert Table 4 about here

Program Choice and Personality Traits

Is it possible to determine which personality types prefer to watch a particular type of television program? As Table 5 reflects, a relationship exists between personality traits and program choice. Extroversion is highly correlated with watching soap operas and news magazine shows. In addition, agreeableness is negatively associated with watching music videos and talk shows. A relationship was also found among the conscientiousness trait and watching news, and news magazine shows. Conscientiousness, however, was negatively correlated with watching music videos. And, significant, positive relationships were found between emotionality and viewing television talk shows. Relationships were not found for the openness personality trait.

Insert Table 5 about here

Relationships Between Program Choice and TV Gratifications

Why do people watch the programs they do? To answer this question, correlational analysis was performed to determine whether a relationship exists between what people watch frequently and the gratifications obtained from viewing the TV show.

As reflected in Table 6, a relationship does exist between watching TV news for information. That is, people who frequently watch TV news reported watching this program for the information it provides. A relationship was also found between viewing, news magazine programs, talk shows, sports shows, and remarkably, music videos provide information gratifications. In addition, significant relationships were found for the entertainment gratification and nine program types. Careful review of the data presented in

Table 6 would show a strong relationship between watching soap operas for entertainment (r = .51, p < .0001) and relaxation (r = .58, p < .0001).

Insert Table 6 about here

DISCUSSION

To what extent do psychological origins like personality traits relate to program choice and gratifications of viewing news shows, soap operas, television movies, and other programs? This study sought to identify whether a relationship between personality, program choice, and gratifications of viewing TV exists. As expected, strong relationships were found between the variables of interest. The results presented in this study are therefore consistent with Katz et al. (1973) and other uses and gratifications theorists who assert that psychological origins should and will explain gratifications for viewing television programs.

Based on an extensive analysis of the data, the following conclusions may be made:

A relationship exists between introversion and watching soap operas for information. A relationship also exists between introversion and watching music videos for information, status enhancement, and passing time gratifications. Extroversion, on the other hand, was only related to watching situation comedies for relaxation, and surprisingly for information. One explanation for this finding may be that extroverts are acquiring their gratifications from the nonmedia sources outlined in Figure 1. It is possible that nonmedia sources like family, friends, and hobbies are fulfilling cognitive, affective, personal, social, and tension-releasing needs.

2. Several relationships were found between the agreeableness/hostile personality trait and viewing gratifications. It appears that situation comedies are fulfilling several gratifications for antagonistic individuals. Hostile people, it is possible to infer, maybe

unable to meet a need for social interaction naturally or through the nonmedia sources. This lack of social interaction may cause them to look for media sources to fulfill social needs. Finn & Gorr (1988) found that individuals who were unable to meet a need for social interaction "in a natural way were more likely to be heavy users of the mass media and were more likely to become involved with the program themselves (p. 136). Therefore it is possible to conclude that "antagonistic" individuals fulfill their needs to interact "vicariously" through the media. It is very likely that situation comedies, talk shows, sport shows, television movies, and local news programs are acting as a surrogate for social interaction needs.

3. Relationships were not found for the openness personality trait. However, two relationships were found for close-minded individuals and watching news programs for entertainment, while ironically, watching music videos for information. It could be that close-minded individuals, because they are not open to new information, simply find news shows entertaining because they do not want to learn anything new. Conway and Rubin (1991) found that authoritarian personalities are intolerant of ambiguous situations, inconsistencies, and dissonance. It is possible that close-minded individuals reject or distort information provided on the news and music videos. It is unclear, at this stage, why music videos are informative for this personality type.
4. Relationships were found for conscientiousness and viewing gratifications, particularly for passing time and escape gratifications. A review of the data obtained in this study shows that unenergetic individuals watch television for status enhancement, passing time, and escape gratifications. Watching television programs that make "one feel better" may be providing "lazy" individuals with needed "energy." It is possible that unenergetic people become invigorated by watching soap operas, real-life drama shows, sports shows, movies, and news programs.

5. The most interesting relationships were found between the emotionality personality trait and gratifications of viewing TV. One explanation for this may be that emotional or tense people are watching television programs to maintain affective states (Bryant & Zillman, 1984; Zillman & Bryant, 1985; Christ & Medoff, 1984). Since research suggests that people low in this trait find more meaning in life, it is possible that calm individuals are the people who watch television to pass time and to escape and are finding certain programs (e.g., news, soap operas, music videos, situation comedies, real-life drama shows, talk shows, sport shows, television movies, and drama shows) to be the ideal means in which to regulate or maintain a "calm" or stable affective state.
6. Some relationships were found for program choice and personality traits. Extroversion appears to be related to frequent viewing of soap operas and news magazine shows. A relationship was found between individuals low in the agreeableness personality trait and frequent viewing of music videos and talk shows. Conscientiousness was related to watching news shows and news magazine shows while unenergetic people reported watching music videos frequently. Emotionality was related to viewing TV talk shows. Relationships, once again, were not found for the openness personality trait and program choice for any of the ten television shows. It could be that open individuals, because of their ability to tolerate variety, get specific gratifications from other media sources. It is possible to speculate that open individuals may not watch television and are frequent users of other media sources (i.e. newspapers, magazines, books, etc.).
7. Relationships were also found for program choice and viewing gratifications. It appears as if people who frequently watch news shows, soap operas, music videos, situation comedies, magazine shows, real-life drama shows, talk shows, sport shows, and television movies are being entertained. It seems plausible to conclude that these shows are being watched because of the entertainment provided. While relationships

were found for most of the programs and viewing gratifications, strong relationships were found for the entertain, escape, and relaxation gratifications.

The results found in this study were surprising. For example, significant relationships were not found for the openness personality trait and very few were found for extroversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness. On the other hand, strong relationships were found for the emotional stability/neurotic personality trait. This suggests that psychological origins are affecting TV viewing gratifications. It may be that some programs are appealing to a broad audience while others such as news and world news shows, soap operas, music videos, and talk shows are appealing to a specific type of viewer.

The strongest relationships were found between program choice and viewing gratifications of soap operas. It is possible to infer that soap operas, for example, are frequently watched because they are fulfilling audience needs for entertainment, to escape, and relax. This suggests that the gratifications provided by a program determines how often a viewer will watch the show(s). Audience members, according to the data, are actively and selectively choosing programs that "they perceive" will fulfill specific gratifications.

CONCLUSION

One contribution this study makes is that it identifies personality explicitly as an antecedent of viewing behavior. The results presented in this study clearly show that psychological origins like personality traits are related to program choice, television use, and gratifications obtained from watching TV programs. The data analysis provides some support for the uses and gratifications paradigm: individuals seek out specific media content to gratify needs. In his article, Rubin (1983) stated that future research should answer the question, "what the specific information needs" and "how doe these needs vary among different ... groups, and what situational, personality and social conditions play a role in the dependence on television?" (p. 51). The most important implication or contribution this study makes is that it provides specific data for uses and gratifications of viewing television programs. The study also supports the notion that individual differences like personality traits will affect media use. It also lends support to the theory that people specifically select and use certain television programs to fulfill specific gratifications/needs.

Future research could expand on the psychological origins of media use and gratifications of television viewing. This study and others in the area would help to explain the influence that personality actually has on media choice, program preferences and the gratifications obtained.

The findings presented in this study are important for network programmers and advertisers as well as uses and gratifications theorists and researchers. Not only does the data help to describe who watches what, but the results also help to distinguish the specific gratification(s) obtained from viewing television. It also provides an explanation for why people watch the shows they do. Knowing the information provided in this study, programmers and advertisers alike could adjust or enhance the content of the show and commercials.

This study makes a distinction between program preference and program choice. Program preferences are attitudes about what particular programs people *would like* to view while program choice involves actual viewing behavior (Wober, 1986).

To reduce channel changing frequencies, advertisers may want to put "entertaining" ads during the shows people find "entertaining." Commercials with details about the product could appear during programs audience members watch for information. Channel changing, or using the remote to avoid commercial breaks, may occur because audience members who are highly involved with an entertaining or informative program, become annoyed with the break and with commercials that do not fulfill the same gratification that he program is providing. The incompatibility of commercial content and program type may cause a break in the program which causes viewers to go "in search of continuous entertainment!"

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Footnotes

[1] The ten program types used in the study were taken from a pretest in which respondents were asked to on an open-ended question to identify their favorite program type(s). The ten categories of program type used in the present study emerged after extensive data analysis of the pretest data.

[2] The program content determined placement of particular shows. Three judges watched the programs and determined the show's "program type."

[3] Nightly or local news is included here for explanatory purposes. Programs were included in this section to help describe how the gratifications for program type was measured.

[4] Four statements assessing information, plus, five statements for entertainment, plus, four statements for status enhancement, plus four statements to measure passing time, plus, three statements for escape, total twenty statements about gratifications.

[5] Since the 6 gratifications are consistently found in study after study, a factor analysis was not performed on the data. It was decided that the gratifications obtained are fairly reliable and therefore this study will build on and even "trust" prior research findings.

[6] Negative items such as introversion, jealous, touchy, spiteful, rude, complain, careless, irresponsible, eccentric, fickle, restless, impulsive, nervous, and fearful, were reverse scored such that lower scores reflected the personality trait under investigation.

[7] Reliabilities for the subscales were as follows: Local/Nightly news .86, Soap operas .86, Real-life drama shows .87, Music videos .89, Situation comedies .88, News magazine shows .90, TV Talk shows, .92, Sports .91, TV Movies .90, and Drama shows .90.

Table 1:

Correlates of Extroversion and Viewing Gratifications

	Information	Entertainment	Status enhancement	Passing time	Escape	Relaxation
News						
Soap Operas	-.21 *					
Music videos	-.18*		-.18*	-.21*		
Situation comedies	.16*					.18*
Magazine shows						
Real-life drama						
Talk shows				-.21*		-.20*
Sports shows						
Television movies						
Drama shows						

* P < .01, ** p < .001

Table 2:

Correlates of Agreeableness and 6 Viewing Gratifications.

	Information	Entertainment	Status enhancement	Passing time	Escape	Relaxation
News	-.21**		-.27**	-.20**	-.24**	
Soap Operas						
Music videos				-.25**		
Situation comedies	-.17*	-.16*	-.22**	-.20*	-.24**	-.15*
Magazine shows						
Real-life drama						
Talk shows					-.19*	-.20*
Sports shows				-.22**		
Television movies	-.17*		-.22**	-.19**	-.28**	-.18*
Drama shows						

* p < .01, ** p < .001

Table

Corre nscientiousness and the 6 Gratifications of Viewing TV Programs.

	Information	Entertainment	Status enhancement	Passing time	Escape	Relaxation
News				-.25**	-.24**	
Soap C				-.23**		
Music						
Situati comec	18*				-.20**	
Magaz						
Real-li			-.25**	-.20**	-.21**	
Talk sh						
Sports		-.27**		-.30**		
Televis movie			-.25**	-.24**	-.20*	
Drama					-.25*	

* p < . 0

Table 4:

Correlates of Emotionality and the 6 Viewing Gratifications.

	Information	Entertainment	Status enhancement	Passing time	Es	Relaxation
News	.17*	.17*	.24**	.16*	.2	
Soap Operas		.21**			.2	.21**
Music videos				.19*	.25**	
Situation comedies	.25**		.22**	.26**	.32	.18*
Magazine shows						
Real-life drama					.21*	
Talk shows	.34**		.27**		.26*	.30**
Sports shows	.21*		.24*		.23*	
Television movies	.27**		.25**	.19*	.31**	
Drama shows		.26*			.21	

* p < .01, ** p < .001

Table 5:

Correlates of Program Choice and the "Big 5" Personality Traits.

	Extroverts	Agreeable	Open	Conscientious	Emotional
News				.24**	
Soap Operas	.15*				
Music Videos		-.20**		-.25**	
Situation comedies					
News magazine shows	.15*			.16*	
Real-life drama					
Talk shows		-.14*			.13*
Sports					
TV Movies					
Dramas					

*p < .01, ** P < .001

Table 6:

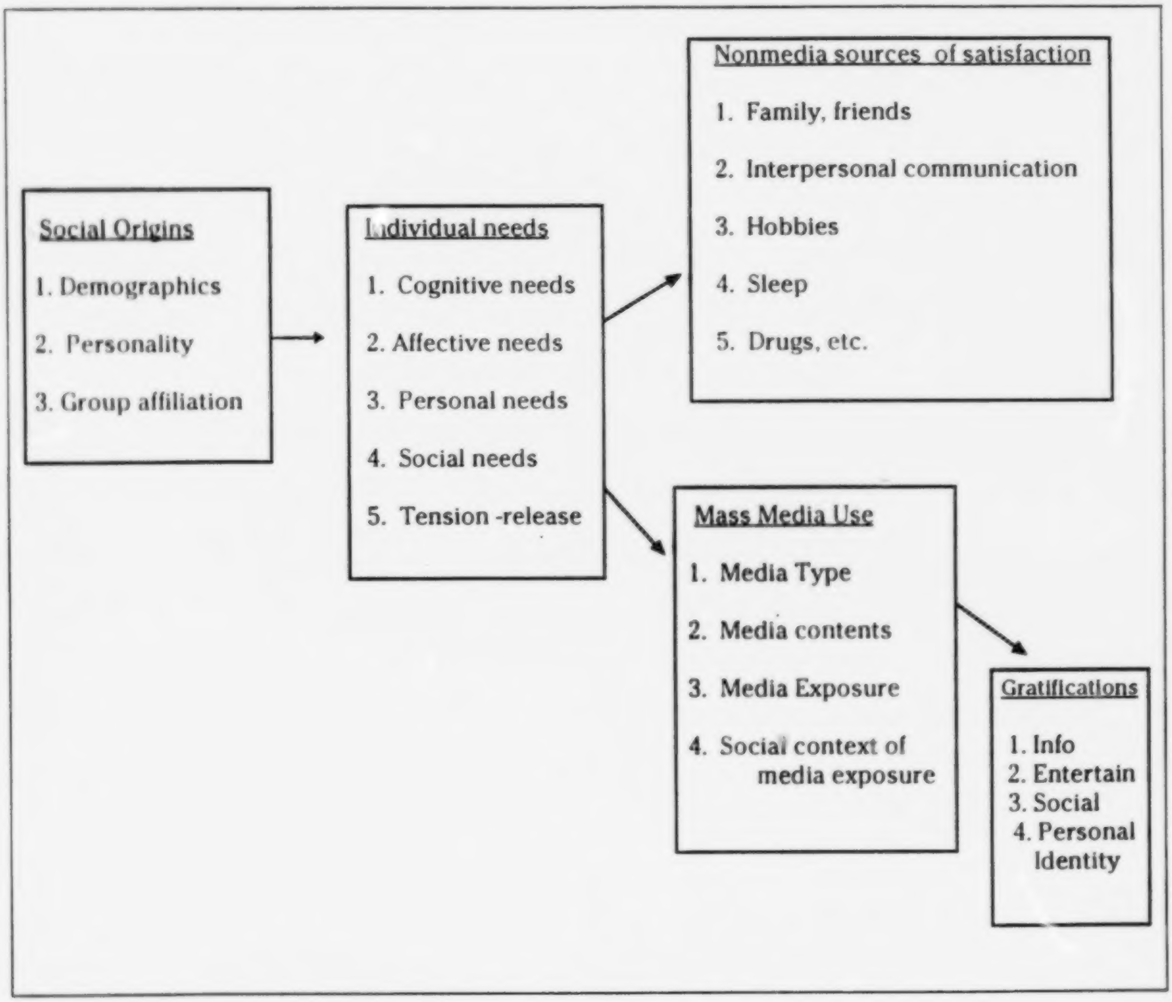
Correlates of Program Choice and the Viewing Gratifications.

	Information	Entertainment	Status enhancement	Passing time	Escape	Relaxation
News	.22**	.23**				.17**
Soap Operas		.51**			.37**	.58**
Music videos	.18*	.32**	.24**	.33**	.36**	.37**
Situation comedies		.25**			.20	.21**
Magazine shows	.21*	.29**	.19*	.25**	.25**	.25**
Real-life drama		.31**				
Talk shows	.33**	.42**	.30**	.29**	.31**	
Sports shows	.31**	.48**	.30**	.23**	.30**	.37**
Television movies		.42**		.23**	.18*	.29**
Drama shows						

* P < .01, ** p < .001

Figure 1:

Theoretical Model of the Uses and Gratifications Paradigm


Social Origins
1. Demographics
2. Personality
3. Group affiliation
Individual needs
1. Cognitive needs
2. Affective needs
3. Personal needs
4. Social needs
5. Tension -release
Nonmedia sources of satisfaction
1. Family, friends
2. Interpersonal communication
3. Hobbies
4. Sleep
5. Drugs, etc.
Mass Media Use
1. Media Type
2. Media contents
3. Media Exposure
4. Social context of media exposure
Gratifications
1. Info
2. Entertain
3. Social
4. Personal Identity

ONLINE SERVICES AS NEWS REPORTING TOOLS:
A STUDY OF DAILY NEWSPAPER USE
OF COMMERCIAL DATABASES IN 1994

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ABSTRACT

ONLINE SERVICES AS NEWS REPORTING TOOLS: A STUDY OF DAILY NEWSPAPER USE OF COMMERCIAL DATABASES IN 1994

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Uses of online research tools for news reporting at newspapers are growing. As one of the two major forms of computer-assisted reporting, online research has extended newsgathering. This paper reports a national study of use of commercial and other online information services used by U.S. daily newspapers in 1994. A total of 208 newspapers with Sunday circulations of 20,000 or larger responded (40.5 percent) to a mail survey of newsroom managers. The survey determined the purposes of online searches, the most popular online services, what newspeople conduct searches, how frequently searches are conduced, and non-proprietary software used during searches. While the study found widespread and frequent use by larger newspapers, online research was still not widely used as a reporting tool by smaller daily newspapers in 1994. There is considerable division over who in the newsroom should conduct searches to control cost. In general, smaller newspapers take a "do-it-yourself" approach and larger newspapers use specialists.

ONLINE SERVICES AS NEWS REPORTING TOOLS:
A STUDY OF DAILY NEWSPAPER USE
OF COMMERCIAL DATABASES IN 1994

The power of the computer has affected news reporting in many ways in the past decade. The increase in personal, or desktop, computing power combined with the decrease in cost has made computer-assisted reporting *the newsgathering tool* of this decade. In addition to database analysis using existing databases or original databases, journalists are using their computers to connect to other computers in distant locations to get the story. Online services have become important reporting tools in the mid 1990s. This trend has developed so quickly that scholarship, and even the professional literature, has not kept up with the exponential growth in use.

The *1994 Gale Directory of Databases* listed 5,564 publicly available online databases and 8,261 total databases worldwide (Williams, 1994). These databases were produced by 2,744 different sources. There are many more private and proprietary databases, of course. Vendors, the companies providing the services, often charge premium prices for access to the information they have. Governments, at all levels, are offering the electronic data that they collect to the public, also, and most services are comparative bargains. Certainly the online services most commonly used can be very expensive, but still worthwhile for journalists as reporting tools.

Databases are collections of related information. One computer expert defined a database as "an integrated, centralized collection of an organization's data" (Davis, 1991,

p. 180). Online access to databases is not only convenient, it is very fast compared to other means. For journalists, especially those on deadline, speed might be the most appealing element of online information gathering. For a skilled news researcher, it may literally take only a few seconds using a commercial service such as Lexis/Nexis to find the owner of a piece of property two thousand miles away or just a few additional seconds to find the property's physical description. Similarly, in some states it takes only minutes to locate the place of residence of an individual who has a driver's license and who was involved in a serious automobile accident just hours or minutes earlier.

As the use of database-oriented news research grows, so does the amount of information available (Rambo, 1987; Murrie, 1987). At least 125 newspapers in 33 states and the District of Columbia had their full-text contents online for public access (Bjorner, 1992; Wall, 1991) at the beginning of this decade. There are literally hundreds of full-text databases available. Dialog, owned by Knight-Ridder, Inc., is perhaps the "king" of these services and lists hundreds of databases through its massive system. The number grows even larger each month.

One of the reasons these full-text databases have caught on is economics. Not only are these services valuable to the newsroom staff, publishers have found home-grown and recycled databases have a *public* market value also. In addition to being tools for their reporters and editors, these services, when sold publicly, are a source of revenue for news media companies (Garrison, 1995; Miller, 1988; Donovan & Schalit, 1989). Many major newspapers will conduct news story database searches for the public for a per-search fee.

Access to data has become an economic issue, but there are other legal and ethical considerations. Privacy invasion has been a major concern in recent years, for example. There are countless legal debates about access to public records now in electronic databases. Some records *could* be accessed online, but are not yet available. Others are available online, but are not accessible to many users because of high costs set by the providers or because of software, hardware, or other "high tech" limitations.

Economic issues involving access and distribution have led some mass communication scholars, such as Emerson College's David Gordon (1993), to look at an emerging society of information haves and have nots. An industry variation of what Gordon called an "informational underclass" may be developing within the news media. Numerous news organizations, especially small dailies, weeklies, and small magazines that are not using online research, often claim they do not have money for hardware or the monthly online subscription and user fees. Even if they could find the money, they claim they lack the expertise to use the tool effectively. "We can't afford it and really don't yet know how to make best use of it," said Bill Weaver (1993), assistant managing editor of *The Macon Telegraph* in Georgia. Similar thinking comes from Sam Daleo, managing editor of the 23,000-circulation Kingston, N.Y., *Daily Freeman*. "We're a local paper and don't have a need for it," he explained.

Online databases used by journalists come in two major varieties, *commercial databases* and *bulletin board systems*. Commercial database services contain useful information available to the public for a fee. Bulletin board systems are often free, requiring the cost of only the long distance call, or charge a subscription or registration fee for users. Online research use in all fields is growing at what seems to be an astronomical rate. One recent estimate predicted as many as twenty million computer users of all types will be online in the United States by the end of the 1990s (Morgan, 1992). A news magazine estimated twelve million users already online in the United States and twenty million users worldwide in 1993 (Kantrowitz, 1993). Another estimate placed six million people subscribing nationwide to the mass market services by 1996. In contrast, fewer than one million persons or businesses used such commercial online services in 1988 (Resnick, 1993). Prodigy, a widely popular commercial online service marketed toward a more general audience of computer users, was posting about 70,000 electronic mail messages daily in late 1992 (Morgan, 1992).

University of Illinois researcher Martha E. Williams (1994) has studied the worldwide database industry for more than two decades. She determined that the number of public databases has grown from only 301 in 1975 and 773 in 1982 to over 8,000 in 1994, and the figure is increasing steadily. Williams stated that the number of producers--- the organizations that develop databases, and vendors, those entities that distribute and add value to the database by providing services for customers--- has also increased dramatically. There were only 200 producers and 105 vendors of databases in 1975. In 1994, Williams reported 2,744 producers and 1,629 vendors. In sheer number, the industry has grown from about 750,000 searches in 1975 to 51.8 million in 1992. To show the amount of recent growth, the number of searches jumped 50.1 percent, from 34.5 million, from 1990 to 1992. "While numerical growth is indicated by the statistics, the success of the database industry is largely a result of the transition of the information industry from paper-based services to computer-based services and can be measured in terms of the use of computer-readable databases, or the number of searches," Williams noted (p. xx).

This usage and these databases indicate the increasing commercialization of online access to information. As more commercial enterprises begin, more privately originated databases entering the marketplace as well. "The basic lure of going online, as the advertising for any commercial online service indicates, is the tantalizing promise of having the world at your fingertips. Join our service and see the world of information without leaving home!" wrote information services expert Kathleen Webb (1993, p. 10). "No more unnecessary trips to the library in nasty weather . . . fire up the machine, and explore new realms in the endless vistas of data available at a keystroke. The attraction is irresistible for increasing numbers of Americans who want and need to keep up with the rapid pace of change in a global community, whether for business, research, or personal purposes. For those who do not have access to, or do not require, more specialized online database services, popular commercial services are a great value . . . . [H]owever, not all personal online services offer equal amounts and types of access to the world at large."

The idea of using online services for reporting has spread to many newspapers in the mid 1990s. One is Michigan's *Flint Journal*. Mary Ann Chick Whiteside (1994), news media manager for the 110,000-circulation newspaper, oversees CAR projects and sets up online staff training classes. "The publisher just approved an electronic library, so I expect more people to become comfortable with online research," she explained. "Reporters are eager to learn. My classes fill quickly. There are times when I could spend entire weeks on computer projects."

Governments are the second-largest producer of publicly available databases used by Whiteside and others. A growing number of these databases are available online through commercial services, direct government services, and direct government bulletin board services. Private commercial and industrial sources are the clear leaders, now responsible for 75 percent of databases available for public use. Government agencies produce about 15 percent of databases, while not-for-profit and academic sources--- many funded by government grants--- generate 9 percent. The remaining one percent is from mixed sources (Williams, 1994).

These figures represent a dramatic change from the situation in "pre-PC" days. In the 1960s and 1970s, the government was the leading source of database production, responsible for as much as 56 percent as late as 1977. That figure dropped to 21 percent in the following decade. Mixed producers, such as more than one government agency or level of government, account for a number of government databases as well. Most prolific in database production, historically, have been the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (formerly the Atomic Energy Commission). Numerous databases produced by the Bureau of the Census are widely used by news organizations and account for a significant proportion of government databases in use by the public in the mid 1990s. More and more of these databases are available through remote access. While many remain available only on site, numerous government agencies at all levels are placing their useful databases into public access with online, CD-

ROM, or magnetic disk access. State and local governments produce and update thousands of useful databases each year. These include such potentially newsworthy subjects as occupational licenses and permits, crime and courts, welfare, automobiles registrations, agriculture, consumer affairs, housing and residences, corporations, voting, pollution, businesses and their operations, education, banking and finance, sports, gambling, lotteries, and gaming, taxes, and just about anything else in life that is regulated.

Another major advantage is that electronic news libraries never, or seldom, close. Reporters are no longer restricted to "normal business hours" for their news research. One study found that reporters use electronic libraries for good reasons. Among them were to develop compilations and lists of information for crime story investigations, business stories, political stories, local government stories, trend stories, and stories about public figures (Splichal, 1991).

The proficiency of use issue is reminiscent of some fears expressed when computers used for writing and editing first arrived in newsrooms in the mid 1970s. Some veteran journalists, as well as beginners, have fears about using computers for something besides writing. Some newspapers even prohibit it until after users are trained to control costs (Ward & Hansen, 1990). Some journalists ignore computer-based research because they feel user interface is too cumbersome, they lack the time to learn, online searches actually lengthen research time, online searches decrease the local perspective of a story, searches discourage original work, and searches increase errors (Wolfe, 1989; Wolfe, 1990; Jacobson & Ullman, 1989). Some reporters prefer someone else to search databases for them, if they use them at all (Wolfe, 1989).

Local beat reporters tend to use electronic news libraries more than other reporters, research shows. Beat reporters use database information for background before starting on a story, to find names for interviews or contacts, to verify information, and for general education about specialized subjects. The most obvious advantages to using electronic libraries are greater perspective, more detail, time savings, identification of new sources, wider geographic coverage, and increased accuracy (Wolfe, 1989; Jacobson & Ullman, 1989; Garrison, 1995).

This paper discusses use of online commercial databases at daily newspapers in the United States in 1994. Access to commercial and government databases is spreading rapidly in American society and news organizations are one of the natural consumers of such electronic information--- just as they have historically been with the printed or written versions of public documents. The primary purpose of this paper is to answer the following five research questions:

- *What are the major reporting uses of online databases?*
- *What are the leading commercial databases and bulletin board services in use by newsrooms, news libraries, and research departments?*
- *Who, in newsrooms, is responsible for conducting searches?*
- *What is the frequency of online searching?*
- *How is the online information accessed?*

METHODS

A national mail survey of the uses of computer-assisted reporting and online news research was conducted between December 1993 and March 1994. The survey consisted of an initial mailing of 514 personalized cover letters, questionnaires, and stamped, self-addressed envelopes to the nation's Sunday newspapers with a circulation of a minimum 20,000. One follow-up mailing was sent about one month after the initial mailing and individual contacts were made by telephone and E-mail to encourage response, following procedures recommended by Dillman's total design method for mail surveys (Dillman, 1978). The population was developed from listings contained in the *Editor & Publisher International Yearbook* (Phillips, 1993).

While the unit of analysis is the newspaper as an institution, editors of the selected newspapers were asked either to complete the questionnaire themselves or to forward it to the person in charge of online news research and / or computer-assisted reporting. Individual identifications were requested to permit follow-up if necessary. In some cases, however, as many as two or three persons completed various portions of the questionnaire related to their newsroom specializations. A total of 208 responses was received, a response rate of 40.5 percent. A representative of one California newspaper returned a questionnaire, stating the publication had ceased publication a few months earlier.

The questionnaire was developed from discussions and interviews during the first Investigative Reporters and Editors and National Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting conference on computer-assisted reporting at Raleigh, N.C., in 1993. Part of a larger research project about computers and reporting (Garrison, 1995), the instrument consisted of four sets of questions, including institutional and personal information, computer-assisted reporting approaches, online news research, and field reporting use of computers. The portion of the instrument that focused upon online news research contained a combination of twenty-nine open- and closed-ended variables. Respondent journalists were also encouraged to include any additional comments on the subject. In some cases, follow-up interviews were conducted by telephone. Additionally, in-person interviews were conducted at the Fort Lauderdale *Sun-Sentinel,* Lexington, Ky., *Herald-Leader, The Miami Herald, The Washington Post,* and *USA Today.* Data were processed using Microsoft FoxPro relational database management system for Windows, Ver. 2.6 (Anon., 1994) and the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, SPSS for Windows Ver. 6.0 (Norusis, 1993).

FINDINGS

Of the newspapers responding, 36.1 percent were from the South and 28.4 percent from the Midwest. The mean circulation was 121,361, with 56.3 percent of newspapers under 75,000 circulation. It should be noted that for simplicity of the following discussion, only percentages are reported in the text. Frequencies are reported with both absolute percentages and adjusted percentages (recomputed without missing data) in the tables. Most major U.S. daily newspapers have gone electronic for research for at least some of their news reporting. With larger newspapers, it is not an issue of *whether* online is being used. The focus is upon *what* is being done. For smaller dailies, the issue remains whether online services are being used *at all*. Smaller dailies are having more difficulty in making the transition. From responses to the survey, it is likely an economic issue, but it could also be a technology issue. Simply, some news organizations have the money and others do not. On the other hand, some have the technological knowledge; others have not even tried to develop it.

Reporting Functions

- *What are the major reporting functions of online research?*

News organizations using online research have produced thousands of stories at least partially dependent on this tool. Topics are widely ranging. Some examples:

a. The *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle / Times-Union* in New York online researches breaking stories about automobile accidents and stories about small businesses in its region.

b. The *Quad City Times* in Rock Island, Ill., investigates businesses by reading annual reports and analyzes the new and growing gambling industry in its Mississippi River region.

c. The *Orange County Register* in California researched property descriptions, ownership, assessments, and assessors' maps using online tools when covering the Laguna area fires that became a story of national interest. The library staff also regularly conducts spot online research for major accidents such as plane crashes.

d. The *Tallahassee Democrat* in Florida uses online tools to find background information about persons such as candidates for the city police chief position, candidates for the vacant presidency of Florida State University, and developers of real estate projects.

e. The *Wisconsin State Journal* in Madison, like many other news organizations, routinely searches other newspapers online to see what its reporters are covering on certain subjects.

For newspapers using services, online research is becoming a spot news reporting tool as well as a research tool for special projects uses apart from deadline situations. In Rochester, the *Democrat and Chronicle* uses online research regularly, said assistant metro editor John Reinan (1993). "We use it nearly daily. Metro and business are really the only users," he said. "There was a fatal car crash last summer in which five people died. The driver was accused of running a stop sign and hitting another car. By logging onto the New York Department of Motor Vehicles database, we found that the driver had a previous conviction for running a stop sign, and we included that info in our first-day story. We had a business reporter doing a story on starting a small business which used a lot of information obtained from an SBA [Small Business Administration] bulletin board."

For other news organizations, use of online research is the first step in starting a major news project after an idea has been generated. "We begin most projects by checking online to see what other publications have done on the subject," *Houston Chronicle* Special Projects Editor Don Mason (1993) stated. "Some of our best successes so far have been early reports on the Michaelangelo virus and issues involving encryption of telecommunications data as well as recent reports on electronic barriers to government information."

Many daily newspapers, such as the *Sarasota Herald-Tribune* in Florida, use online research for backgrounding on stories. Assistant Managing Editor Richard Estrin

(1993) said, "Our effort is in its infancy, but we hope to involve everyone. We use online research for background to many stories." Database Editor Griff Palmer (1993), who helps find online sources for Oklahoma City's *Daily Oklahoman*, said his newspaper uses online services such as DataTimes to take stories to a higher level of completeness. "We use online research daily to supplement our reporting. We constantly use DataTimes and our own electronic morgue, which is stored as a full-text database," he explained. "As a recent example, we used DataTimes to research allegations of improprieties in other states against a contractor under local consideration. We also used the Texas Ethics Commission BBS to download registration information on a company under investigation in Oklahoma for campaign contributions violations. We have also downloaded census data from the state commerce department BBS for use with analysis of voter registration data."

As these two examples demonstrate, database searches can turn routine news into highly effective stories. Reporters and news researchers who incorporate online tools into their work find their stories are more comprehensive. Online tools can provide more depth and breadth of information. It becomes easier to find similar situations elsewhere. Generalizations about situations, a tradition common among news and feature writers, without examples or other forms of evidence in stories are less common when online research is a regular part of reporting.

Reporters and editors also find they have a wider range of sources, since they can use online sources, such as articles from newspapers halfway across the country, to identify and locate these experts and other sources that enhance a story. Not only do sources used in other stories become easier to find, there are even online services designed to link reporters and news sources. Often these are public relations services--- such as ProfNet, which is a computer network of universities and colleges that have hundreds of experts on virtually every subject on their faculties who are willing to help journalists.

Reporters are also more easily able to find officially released information. Press releases from government agencies (for example, found on some FedWorld BBSs), from corporations (such as those on PR Online), from organizations (such as some of the Internet institutional BBSs), and other groups that want their word to be spread and have discovered that computer-wise reporters and editors will use such sources when they are available at low cost or free. For the 1994 Winter Olympics in Norway, the United States Olympic Committee set up a sophisticated high-speed BBS--- complete with downloadable text files, regular team announcements, information about the games, news, and E-mail--- for sportswriters and others interested in following the U.S. team's efforts. The only cost to use the service was the toll of a long distance call to Colorado. Journalists in 1995 are also using online tools to monitor the courtroom activities, such as witness testimony, of the murder trial of O.J. Simpson. This has been especially helpful to live television journalists, such as CNN anchors, when the judge has cut off audio or video from the courtroom.

Leading Databases Used

- *What are the leading commercial databases and bulletin board services in use by newsrooms, news libraries, and research departments?*

Of the 208 newspapers responding to the survey, 58.9 percent, or 119, reported using online services in some form--- commercial or otherwise. Those not using online services were clearly smaller circulation newspapers. Table 1 lists, alphabetically by newspaper and in order of service preference, the online services and BBSs most frequently used by U.S. daily newspapers. Table 2 summarizes data listed in Table 1 by reporting the most often named first choice online database and the most often "top three" services named. As Table 2 reveals, the most popular services are commercial in nature. CompuServe, one of the largest and oldest online services, is the first choice of 19.2 percent of the 99 newspapers that reported using specific online services. Nexis/Lexis was preferred by 16.2 percent of the newspapers. DataTimes (12.1 percent) and Dialog (11.1 percent) were the other major international commercial online services of choice. A significant 13.1 percent of the newspapers responding stated their first choice for database services was a local database service of some sort--- which could include a local or regional commercial service, a local link to local government records, or some BBSs.

Among the services listed in the "top three," Nexis/Lexis is the leader with frequent use from 15.8 percent of the 260 total top three database preferences expressed in the study. CompuServe and Dialog were tied for second at 13.5 percent each, and DataTimes followed with 10.8 percent of mentions. Again, local services also ranked high in the top three with 11.2 percent of the listed favorites.

Online Search Responsibilities

- *Who is responsible for conducting searches in newsrooms, news libraries, and research departments?*

One of the computer-age concerns in newsrooms is the cost of online searching. It can be very expensive, depending on time used and the hourly cost of the database. Some news managers are still deciding whether to assign the duty to anyone with the skill, the reporter on the story, the supervising editor or a designated editor, or news librarians/researchers. A wide range of often-overlapping approaches was determined, as shown in Table 3, but of daily newspapers conducting online searches for news stories, the largest number use either librarians (40.5 percent) or reporters (25.6 percent) themselves. The data show some differences in how the problem is approached according to the size of the newspaper. The larger the newspaper, the more specialized the duties. Larger newspapers tend to use news researchers for searches while smaller newspapers take more of a "do-it-yourself" approach. "Anyone" searches at 23.1 percent, and editors do searches at 9.9 percent. A total of 41.8 percent of the newspapers did not answer the question, probably because no in-house searches are conducted.

Frequency of Online Searching

- *What is the frequency of online searches conducted in newsrooms, news libraries, and research departments?*

Many news organizations repeat the online research process numerous times a day as part of their newsgathering routine. For many, online research is part of the daily effort on news stories. Efforts are underway to teach reporters how to integrate online news research into every reporting assignment. Online news research is an "everyday" part of reporting and editing at the *Seattle Times*, where Information Systems Manager Steve Wainwright (1993) said his newspaper spends over $20,000 annually to use online tools to track down information about businesses and missing persons, for example. At *The Dallas Morning News*, online news research has become a moment-by-moment part of the reporting process. "We use it nearly each hour of every day," Assistant Projects Editor Allen Pusey (1993), who serves as liaison for use of computers by reporters and editors for his newsroom, stated. "Online research has become a vital resource. Online research has given us a broader-based view of previous work on a subject BEFORE we begin stories. It has also given us a higher quality of context to our stories--- be they economic, scientific, or legal/social."

Cost could be a factor in frequency of use. The mean amount of money spent on online services reported by newspapers for 1993 was $16,025.57 and the mean for 1994 was $17,210.13. Spending in 1994 ranged from no money at all to $115,000. But many newspapers that did conduct online news research did not wish to reveal what might be viewed as proprietary information.

The data show a wide range of usage frequencies for online database searching among those daily newspapers conducting searches. Table 4 shows a similar pattern of search frequency differences according to size of the newspaper. Larger newspapers search very frequently, some numerous times a day, or what they would call "constantly." Smaller dailies which did any online searches at all were quite careful, it seems, in using the tool. Smaller dailies searched less than daily, some less than weekly. Overall, 41.9

percent of the newspapers that answered the question reported using online services at least once daily, 12.5 percent said their searches were weekly or greater, 4.4 percent used online services on a weekly basis, 3.7 percent conduced searches weekly to monthly, and 4.4 percent used online services monthly or less than monthly.

Tools for Access to Online Services

- *How is the online information accessed? That is, what is the preferred communications software used for conducting online searches in newsrooms, news libraries, and research departments?*

The study found a diverse list of communication packages in use in U.S. daily newspaper newsrooms. Of those packages, Procomm Plus, used in both DOS and Windows versions, is by far the most popular in newsrooms and news libraries. Procomm Plus (Windows or DOS versions) was reported as first choice in 53.3 percent of the newsrooms. Crosstalk (9.2 percent) and Smartcom (9.2 percent) are also in wide use at the 120 newspapers reporting use of this software. A total of 20.8 percent used other products such as "Terminal," that comes with the basic Windows package or Macintosh systems software. Some users, who do not access online services often, find the communications tools provided in integrated packages, such as ClarisWorks, to be quite sufficient for their needs.

CONCLUSIONS

The results reported in this study suggest something quite obvious: *Size matters*. Larger newspapers, with the financial resources, are heavy online services users. These newspapers report spending thousands of dollars a year for online services and many more thousands of dollars a year for salaries for news researchers. The power of the tool is slowly creeping into the newsrooms middle and small size dailies also.

While economics seems to be the obvious reason for differences in use of online services in news reporting, there are other factors that influence the spread of this new reporting technology. A second influencing factor seems to be human resources. Many newspapers lack personnel with the computer literacy to begin a regular program of online news research to supplement reporting. These newspapers do not have the resources to train an individual either internally, if such expertise was available, or externally. Typically, the smaller newspapers that are using online news research tools in reporting are driven by one or two individuals--- either reporters, librarians, or editors, who have an intense interest in personal computing and have taught themselves the skills necessary to be effective users of online services.

Among those using online services for reporting, the uses of online services is broadening. Much of the use is still to check what the competition is doing, but more reporters are also using online services for fact checking, story idea generation, backgrounding, and for greater depth of information for both long-term projects and breaking stories.

It is not the least bit surprising that the leading commercial international databases would also be the leading services used by news organizations. While there is an emerging pattern toward greater use of highly specialized online services such as those with specific types of public records (i.e., Public Affairs Court Electronic Records, or PACER, of the federal courts system), news organizations favor services that can provide a wide range of access to useful information for a fair price. The widely popular mass-marketed services such as Prodigy and America Online have yet to become very valuable to news reporters because of the consumer nature of the information available. There will likely be more growth in use of the Internet in this decade since access to it has grown in such remarkable geometric proportions in the past year or two.

There is also a confusion evident in the newsroom about who should use online services. The data here suggest two schools of thought: (a) let anyone and everyone do online research for news reporting and (b) give online duties to specialists. The findings of this study show smaller papers take the first route and larger ones take the second choice, but this could change as more skills are learned and as costs drop, if they drop, for online fees.

Frequency of use also remains an economic issue, but as more and more skilled users come into medium- and small-sized newsrooms, this could also change. Most CAR advocates would like to see online research become as regular a habit for reporters as checking the clips and conducting interviews has been for generations of reporters.

Online commercial services are not some sort of fad. Usage patterns and the functions of the use demonstrate that. Perhaps the issue here is not whether the services will be used, but how often, by whom, and for what purposes. As this new tool gains greater access and application, new research to track this will be necessary throughout the rest of this decade. Research at this stage can only be exploratory since factors affecting use, such as the economy, the tools themselves, and the people involved, change often. For researchers, this is a subject ripe for investigation. In the minds of some investigators, there has not been such an exciting prospect for information gathering since the telephone was first used for interviewing.

It is clear that new and continuing research about CAR, such as online services, is necessary. New works such as several of the contributions in Semonche's (1993) edited *News Media Libraries*, offer syntheses and interpretations of the new uses of online computer tools in reporting. Further research will permit greater depth and more focus on specific aspects of online CAR, such as differences in institutional and individual uses that are not readily distinguished here. Further, new research needs to probe into behavorial reasons for differences in responses that have been identified. Annual analysis of newspapers' uses of online tools will indicate the amount of change that is occurring. It may also suggest manners in which online research impacts upon how communities are covered and what readers are learning from CAR-based news stories. This particular introductory study, representing part of a one-shot first-time design, has inherent shortcomings in its approach. But it is the first stage in what will be an annual review of CAR. Subsequent reports will offer deeper and, hopefully, more meaningful analyses.

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TABLE 1: FREQUENTLY USED ONLINE SERVICES AT U.S. DAILY NEWSPAPERS

Newspaper	*Most-Often Used Databases / Services*
Allentown Morning Call	PACER, Nexis
Anchorage Daily News	Vu/Text, Motznik (state records), CompuServe
Annapolis Capital	AP Graphics Net, Presslink
Arkansas Democrat-Gazette	PACER, Arkansas courts, local taxes-deeds
Asbury Park Press (N.J.)	Nexis, CompuServe, Internet
Asheville Citizen-Times (N.C.)	CompuServe
Atlanta Constitution	Dialog, Lexis/Nexis, DataTimes
Atlantic City Press	Lexis/Nexis, CompuServe, FedWorld
Austin American-Statesman	Local court files database, Internet, PACER
Battle Creek Enquirer (Mich.)	PACER
Beaumont Enterprise	Texas Controller's Office, Texas Employment Commission, various private BBSs.
Belleville News-Democrat (Ill.)	Regional government BBS, State pollution BBS, NUDOCS (NRC)
Bend Bulletin (Ore.)	County tax records, Dialog, state road reports
Bloomington Pantagraph	DataTimes
Boca Raton News	Dialog, Vu-Text, CompuServe
Camden Courier-Post	CompuServe
Cape Cod Times	Dow Jones, CompuServe, PACER
Charleston Post & Courier	CompuServe, state BBSs
Charleston (W.Va.) *Gazette*	In-house library, government databases
Chicago Tribune	In-house library, Nexis, DataTimes, Dialog
Cincinnati Enquirer	Tristate Online, Internet, CompuServe
Cleveland Plain Dealer	County auditor records, Information America, various other online government databases
Columbus Dispatch	Internet, Lexis/Nexis, FedWorld
Dallas Morning News	CompuServe, America Online, MetroNet
Dayton Daily News	County government, Prodigy, Nexis
Decatur Herald & Review	Dun & Bradstreet Market Identifier, Business DB Plus, Disclosure II
Des Moines Register	Iowa motor vehicles, Local property records, DataTimes (in-house)
Deseret News	DataTimes, CompuServe, Internet
Detroit Free Press	Lexis, Internet, PressLink
Detroit News	Lexis/Nexis, National Credit Data Network, local court records
Doylestown Intelligencer Record	CompuServe, Bell Atlantic Intelligate
Elmira Star-Gazette	Prodigy and CompuServe
Eugene Register-Guard (Ore.)	CompuServe financial databases, regional public records services
Evansville Courier	Vu/Text, Fed World
Flint Journal (Mich.)	County court records, Dialog, DataTimes
Florida Times-Union	Lexis, Nexis
Florida Today	CompuServe
Fort Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel	In-house database, Dialog, local courts, Nexis
Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette	Vu/Text, DataTimes, Dialog
Gannett Suburban Newspapers Westchester	Nexis, CompuServe, Internet
Greensboro News & Record	Dialog, Nexis, Dow Jones, DataTimes
Greensburg Tribune-Review	Federal Election Commission online, CompuServe, Nexis, Dialog
Harrisburg Patriot-News	DataTimes
Hartford Courant	CompuServe, local BBSs, Nexis
Houston Chronicle	Nexis, DataTimes, Dialog
Huntington Herald Dispatch	CompuServe
Huntsville Times	PACER
Indianapolis Star	DataTimes, Nexis, government databases
Kansas City Star	Nexis, DataTimes, Dialog
Knoxville News-Sentinel	CompuServe, E. Tennessee Bankruptcy Court (PACER), Vu-text
Lakeland Ledger (Fla.)	Internet, DataTimes, CompuServe
Lansing State Journal	America Online, Labor Market Info. Online
Long Beach Press-Telegram	DataQuick, Dialog
Lorain Morning Journal (Ohio)	Nexis/Lexis, Presslink
Louisville Courier-Journal	Dialog, DataTimes, Nexis
Memphis Commercial-Appeal	Dialog, Nexis, DataTimes
Miami Herald	CompuServe, Nexis/Lexis, Dialog
Milwaukee Journal	Wisconsin census data, FEC, Nexis
Mobile Press Register	Dow Jones, Alabama Legislative Reports (ALERT), America Online
Modesto Bee	Nexis, DataTimes, America Online, Internet
Munster Times (Ind.)	Dialog, NewsNet, CompuServe
Muskegon Chronicle (Mich.)	DataTimes, Internet, Dialog
Newport News Daily Press (Va.)	Dialog, state database services

Newsday	In-house database, Nexis, Dialog, Dow Jones
Orange County Register	Nexis, Prentice Hall Online, DataQuick/Damar
Orlando Sentinel	Dialog, Nexis, America Online
Peoria Journal Star	DataTimes, CompuServe, PACER
Philadelphia Inquirer	Nexis, Dialog (Vu/Text), CENDATA
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette	Vu-Text (own library), Nexis, Prodigy
Poughkeepsie Journal	CompuServe, National Library of Medicine, New York state motor vehicle database
Quad City Times	CompuServe
Raleigh *News & Observer*	Lexis/Nexis, NandO.net and Internet, Dialog, county databases
Reading Eagle and Times	DataTimes
Richmond Times-Dispatch	Dialog, state employment and corporate records
Roanoke Times & World-News	Lexis/Nexis, DataTimes, state court records, Internet, ProfNet
Rochester Democrat and Chronicle/Times-Union	N.Y. Dept. Motor Vehicles, ProfNet, Internet
Rocky Mountain News	Denver court records, Internet, DataTimes
Royal Oak (Mich.) Daily Tribune	CompuServe
St. Louis Post-Dispatch	CompuServe, Dialog, Dow Jones, Nexis
St. Petersburg Times	Nexis/Lexis, Dialog, DataTimes
San Jose Mercury News	Mercury Center (AOL), Internet
Santa Cruz County Sentinel	Dow Jones, Internet, various private BBSs
Santa Rosa Press Democrat	Dialog, Infotek, Nexis
Sarasota Herald-Tribune	Nexis, CompuServe, Dialog
Seattle Times	In-house, state courts, CompuServe
Spartanburg Herald-Journal	DataTimes, CompuServe, PACER
Syracuse Post-Standard	Nexis, Dialog, CompuServe
Tallahassee Democrat	Vu/Text, Dialog news, Dialog business databases
Tampa Tribune	CompuServe, Dialog, Delphi/Internet
The Buffalo News	DataTimes, Dialog, Nexis
The Daily Oklahoman	In house, DataTimes, Commerce Dept. BBS
The Eagle-Tribune, Lawrence	PACER, Federal Election Commission online
The Press Enterprise (Riverside)	DataTimes, Lexis/Nexis, Local courts files
The Washington Post	In-house database, Lexis/Nexis, DataTimes, Dialog
Tucson Citizen	CompuServe, PressLink
The Columbian (Vancouver)	DataTimes, Washington state judicial, public disclosure databases
Torrance Daily Breeze (Calif.)	DataTimes, Nexis, Dialog
Tri-City Herald (Wash.)	CompuServe
Virginian-Pilot and *Ledger-Star*	Internet, Dialog, Nexis/Lexis
Waterloo Courier	Dialog
Wichita Eagle	Dialog (Vu/Text), DataTimes, Nexis
Wisconsin State Journal	Nexis, CompuServe, Dialog

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TABLE 2: MOST POPULAR ONLINE SERVICES AT U.S. DAILY NEWSPAPERS

Database Service	*Most Used*	*Among Top Three Services Named*
CompuServe	18.6% (19)	13.3% (36)
Nexis/Lexis	16.7 (17)	15.9 (43)
Local database services	12.7 (13)	11.1 (30)
DataTimes	11.8 (12)	10.7 (29)
Dialog	11.8 (12)	14.0 (38)
In-house library databases	6.9 (7)	3.0 (8)
PACER	4.9 (5)	3.3 (9)
Vu-Text*	4.9 (5)	2.6 (7)
Federal government services	3.9 (4)	5.9 (16)
Internet	2.9 (3)	6.3 (17)
America Online	1.0 (1)	1.8 (5)
Prodigy	1.0 (1)	1.1 (3)
DataQuick	1.0 (1)	0.7 (2)
Dun & Bradstreet	1.0 (1)	0.4 (1)
AP Graphics Net	1.0 (1)	0.4 (1)
Bulletin board services		2.6 (7)
Presslink		1.5 (4)
FedWorld		1.1 (3)
ProfNet		0.7 (2)
Tristate Online		0.4 (1)
Info America		0.4 (1)
MetroNet		0.4 (1)
Business DB Plus		0.4 (1)
Disclosure II		0.4 (1)
Bell Atlantic Intelligate		0.4 (1)
Labor Market Info		0.4 (1)
NewsNet		0.4 (1)
Prentice-Hall Online		0.4 (1)
Infotek		0.4 (1)
Totals	100.0% (102)	100.0% (271)

* Formerly a separate service, Vu-Text is now part of Dialog and is also available through CompuServe. Since some respondents listed it separately from Dialog and CompuServe, a separate category was maintained.

N = 208.

TABLE 3: ONLINE SEARCH RESPONSIBILITIES AT U.S. DAILY NEWSPAPERS

Circulation	*"Anyone"*	*Reporters*	*Editors*	*Librarians*	*No Searches*
Under 50,000	2.4% (2)	14.1% (12)	7.0% (6)	2.4% (2)	74.1% (63)
50,000-100,000	12.1 (7)	29.3 (17)	6.9 (4)	24.1 (14)	27.6 (16)
100,001-250,000	12.2 (5)	26.8 (11)	4.9 (2)	46.3 (19)	9.8 (4)
250,001-500,000	4.8 (1)	23.8 (5)	0.0 (0)	66.6 (14)	4.8 (1)
Over 500,000	11.1 (1)	22.2 (2)	0.0 (0)	66.7 (6)	0.0 (0)
Totals	7.5 (16)	22.0 (47)	5.6 (12)	25.7 (55)	39.3 (84)

Note: Some newspapers reported multiple responses. Percentages are for rows.
N = 214 (208 total newspapers responding).

TABLE 4: FREQUENCY OF ONLINE SEARCHING AT U.S. DAILY NEWSPAPERS

Circulation	*Daily*	*Weekly or greater*	*Monthly or greater*	*Monthly or less*	*Other*	*None*
Under 50,000	2.4% (2)	7.3% (6)	1.2% (1)	8.5% (7)	11.0% (9)	69.5% (57)
50,000-100,000	23.6 (13)	10.9 (6)	9.1 (5)	1.8 (1)	21.8 (12)	32.7 (18)
100,001-250,000	41.5 (17)	17.1 (7)	7.3 (3)	0.0 (0)	22.0 (9)	12.2 (5)
250,001-500,000	78.9 (15)	5.3 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	10.5 (2)	5.3 (1)
Over 500,000	100.0 (7)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)
Totals	26.5 (54)	9.8 (20)	4.4 (9)	3.9 (8)	15.7 (32)	39.7 (81)

Percentages are for rows.
N = 208.

The Paradox of Public Concern About Crime: An Interim Report

by

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ABSTRACT

This paper tests the agenda-setting influence of local media on growing public concern about crime at a time when statistics showed crime rates were decreasing. Findings suggest that the way the media told the crime story, particularly as it relates to certain personal cues, changed dramatically in two Texas cities at about the same time that public opinion polls detected an almost unprecedented growth in public concern about crime. Although this analysis stops short of a full understanding of the convergence of other media phenomenon that may be affecting the polls, changes in the way crime was covered, taken together, suggest reasons for the public to feel a greater sense of concern and fear about crime.

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The Paradox of Public Concern About Crime: An Interim Report

Recent poll numbers about crime present an interesting paradox, a paradox that has media scholars and public policy analysts alike searching for clues. In just eight months (from June 1993 to January 1994), the percentage of the public ranking crime as the biggest problem in the country jumped from five to 31 percent. At that same time, crime statistics indicate the number of American households touched by crime was in a downward spiral (Morin, 1994).

The phenomenon is as true for local polls as for national. In Texas, where the crime rate has been falling since 1991, public opinion polls show just the opposite. Reports of the Department of Public Safety (1992 and 1993) show that the rate of violent crime decreased 2.3 percent from 1991 to 1992 and 3.5 from 1992 to 1993. Total crime volume decreased 8.2 percent between 1991 and 1992 and 6.8 percent between 1992 and 1993.

In spite of these statistics, the Texas Poll recorded record levels of public concern about crime, climbing from two percent in 1992 to a high of 37 percent in 1994. The latest numbers show that about one-fourth of Texans polled still think that crime is the most important problem facing the state.

Why is it that while the numbers say the average American is safer, concern about crime is unprecedented? Many fingers point to the agenda-setting influence of media on public concerns, in this situation concerns built largely from images produced by media emphasis on crime.

The idea that our perception of crime can be manipulated by the media is by no means a recent one. In his autobiography, Lincoln Steffens tells this story about a New York crime wave that had Theodore Roosevelt hopping:

> Parker, who was 'wise' and liked to mystify, explained that when the crime wave was running high he inquired into it. . . .he asked for the police records of crime and arrests. These showed no increase at all; on the contrary the totals of crimes showed a diminution and the arrests an increase. It was only the newspaper reports of crimes that had increased; there was a wave of publicity only (Steffens, 1931, p. 290).

Six decades later another observer saw the same contradiction. "The recent emphasis on crime news may seem ironic or even misplaced to some who have looked at recent crime statistics and found them declining," says Jeffrey D. Alderman of ABC News (1994).

Richard Morin of *The Washington Post* echoes Alderman's concern. "So great is the apparent disconnect between the image and the reality of crime that some students of public opinion and politics contend that the public is once again being stampeded by the news media," he says (Morin, 1994).

David Broder warns readers to be "wary when the press pumps up a crime scare and Washington politicians jump on the bandwagon."

Even though conventional wisdom suggests the media play a role in the public's high concern about crime, an investigation that relates the spectacular increase in public concern about crime to the ways contemporary media coverage may have changed is warranted.

Previous Studies

The ease with which the media can manipulate public opinion about crime that fascinated the muckrakers, was visited again by Fishman (1980) in the mid-1970s. He saw crime coverage, and the occasional crime wave manufactured by media hype, as the product of two factors: reliance on readily available bureaucratic sources, like police blotters, and the overriding need of reporters to organize concepts within a larger context. In other words, to connect otherwise unconnected incidents in some larger frame of reference.

Scholars in the fields of media studies, sociology and criminology have established that the amount of crime coverage in newspapers and on television sometimes bears little resemblance to reality. Their work shows that media coverage exaggerates violence and that this exaggeration can be traced to an increase in public fear about crime.

Newspapers: Even the Newspaper Association of America confesses that when it comes to crime, the word alone can sell a newspaper (Albers, 1994). Scholars and media critics agree. In *Crime and the American Press,* Lotz (1991) blasts the coverage of crime: "Crime runs rampant in the American press; papers do such a brisk business in crime that they are, in effect, advertising disorder" (p. 2). In his examination of newspapers in four American cities, Lotz claims that the press does not reflect crime trends and that "crimes may make the front page whether or not they are great in some absolute sense" (p. 34). He attributes the distorted coverage to the definition of what constitutes news and newspapers' need to fill the news hole.

One of the classics in the field is Graber's (1980) content analysis of the *Chicago Tribune*, which found a distortion between the amount of actual crime and the emphasis given crime in the newspaper. Windhauser, Seiter and Winfree (1991) looked at the relationship between actual crime rates and crime coverage in 22 Louisiana cities and did not find a clear relationship between actual crime and crime coverage.

Katz (1987) examined crime coverage in New York and Los Angeles papers over a seven-year period and claims that all crime news stories that are published fit one or more of four classic forms of moral problematics: personal competence and sensibility; collective integrity; moralized political conflicts; and white collar crime. He explains that crime news has been present in newspapers for about 150 years and that daily crime news serves as a "ritual moral exercise" where the public works out individual perspectives on moral questions. He also notes the emphasis in the news on violent crime.

Marsh (1991) went beyond the boundaries of the United States and conducted a comparative analysis on the literature of crime coverage in newspapers in the United States and other countries from 1960-1989. He found four areas in which the coverage was similar. An over-representation of violent crimes and an under-representation of property crimes seemed to be the norm in many countries. The research also concludes that the percentages of violent crimes reported in newspapers do not match official crime statistics.

Television News: The guiding principle in television newsrooms for a long time was "If it bleeds, it leads." As Goodman (Nov. 27, 1994) says "violent crime is made for the tube. . . . .the small-screen world is composed largely of villains and victims." According to Edmonson (May, 1994), the American public cannot let go of crimes "because television won't let go."

The author reports that the three major networks ran about five crime stories a night in 1993. His statistics were based on a study conducted by the Center for Media and Public Affairs in Washington, D.C.

An article in *Mediaweek* (Freeman, 1994) gave additional information about the study, showing that stories about crime doubled on the network evening news in one year. In 1992, there were 785 crime stories but the number jumped to 1,632 in 1993. The number of murder stories tripled from 104 in 1992 to 329 in 1993. The study also found that murder and assault averaged 66 stories per month from January to July of 1993 and jumped to an average of 111 stories per month for the second half of the year.

"Reality" Shows: Researchers have gone beyond the examination of television news and looked at what is commonly known as "reality shows." Fennel (December 7, 1992) documents the increased number of such television shows (such as *Unsolved Mysteries, Top Cops and I Witness Video*), suggesting that their popularity may be due to economic forces. The cost of producing an episode of one of these shows is approximately half the cost of producing a drama series like *Star Trek.*

Not only are there more such shows, they also tend to emphasize violent crime. Oliver (1994) conducted a content analysis of five "reality-based" police shows: *America's Most Wanted, Cops, Top Cops, FBI, The Untold Story,* and *American Detective.* She found that violent crime was over-represented in these shows and the percentage of crimes that were portrayed as solved was also quite high.

Effects Studies: This constant media diet of crime and violence is not without consequences. Gordon and Heath (1991) found that the amount of newshole devoted to violent crime is associated with fear of crime. Readers of newspapers with a larger portion of their newshole devoted to crime are more fearful of crime than are readers of newspapers in the same city that have a lesser proportion of space devoted to crime coverage. A similar study by Williams and Dickinson (1993) found a significant positive correlation between fear of crime and amount of coverage independent of demographic factors.

Gebotys, Roberts and DasGupta (1988) found similar effects in television, a significant positive relationship between media use and perceptions of crime seriousness. High television news viewing was associated with high ratings for crime as a serious public policy issue. They also noted that female judgments of crime seriousness were higher than that of males.

Liska and Baccaglini (1990) examined fear of crime. Noting that media coverage is unaffected by crime rates, they also concluded that homicide stories show by far the strongest relationship to fear and pointed to the fact that while homicide constituted only .02 percent of all index crimes, it constituted 29.9 percent of all crime stories. The researchers also found that local stories correlate stronger with fear of crime than non-local stories.

Gerbner and his associates (1986) look at the public's perceptions of crime as one of the factors in their extensive cultivation analysis work. They found that in prime time, threats abound:

> Crime in prime time is at least 10 times as rampant as in the real world. An average of 5 to 6 acts of overt physical violence per hour menace over half of all major characters (p. 26).

Estep and MacDonald (1983) focused specifically on primetime crime-related shows and found that there was an exaggerated focus on murder, robbery and assault. This over-representation of violent crime as compared to property crime, argued the researchers, maximizes the fear of crime within the public.

Consequences for the audience also were measured by Schlesinger (1993). After interviewing the audience for the reality-based show *Crimewatch UK*, which airs in England, Schlesinger found one in three respondents thought the show made them feel more cautious about going out alone in the dark. They also believed other people were afraid of crime as a result of watching the program.

Other researchers examined the effects of the media's coverage of crime beyond the relationship between fear and crime. Pritchard (1986) studied the agenda-setting effect of crime news on prosecutors in the district attorney's office in Milwaukee County, Wisconsin. He found that the average length of stories about a case was the strongest predictor of whether prosecutors engaged in negotiations for homicide cases.

Carlson (1983) looked at the possible link between crime show viewing by preadults and attitudes toward civil liberties and concluded that crime show viewing is associated negatively with support for civil liberties.

Theoretical Framework

When Graber (1984) set out to explain the difference between agenda-setting and agenda-building, she might have had crime coverage in mind. She said

> The media set the agenda when they are successful in riveting attention on a problem. They build the public agenda when they supply the context that determines how people think about the issue and evaluate its merits (p. 264).

McCombs calls this process of giving issues context and texture the "second dimension of agenda-setting" (McCombs, 1994). This process is one he had alluded to earlier, saying:

> News is not just rational discourse, not just educational presentations on the issues of the day. News has tone and drama. News communicates much more than the facts. A psychologist would say that news messages are both cognitive and affective. A journalist would say that the news is a blend of information and entertainment (McCombs, 1992).

Since other researchers have established a clear agenda-setting pattern to media crime coverage, we elected to look beneath the generic issue of crime coverage to this second dimension.

Instead of attempting to measure the changes in public salience of crime as purely an effect of changing amounts of crime coverage, we designed a study to look for other attributes of coverage that may affect the way the public sees the issue. In this sense, we believe we are leaving the theoretical realm of early agenda-setting studies to embrace the conceptual underpinnings of framing theory.

Framing is probably one of the most important yet most elusive concepts in mass communications research. It is important because it is a component in the formation of public opinion. According to Price (1992), people form opinions based on more than information. Opinions also are affected by beliefs, attitudes and group identification, all of which may be molded in the way a story is told. . .the way it is framed. Gamson and Modigliani (1989) say "Media discourse is part of the process by which individuals construct meaning" (p. 2). Our study will use standard content analysis techniques to look for the ways these meanings might be effected in the construction of crime stories.

In short, this study extends beyond traditional content analysis and the basic agenda-setting hypothesis. The emphasis here is on the exploration and elaboration of a "second dimension" agenda-setting hypothesis, which, in generic form, asserts that *the attributes and frames of news stories influence the pictures of news stories in people's minds* about such issues as crime. Five specific attributes and forms are detailed in the methodology section. Although the major contribution of this study is the exploration and elaboration of this second dimension of agenda-setting, our content analysis also yields a test of the basic agenda-setting hypothesis, which asserts that *the increased salience of crime on the public agenda is the result of increased crime coverage on the media agenda.*

Methodology

We collected crime coverage data for newspapers and local television news shows in the two most populous Texas cities: Dallas and Houston. The study was limited to Texas because we wanted to test for a direct connection between news coverage and poll data. Since there is no truly national newspaper, we decided to test for effects in a single large state.

To control for the possibility of intervening variables affecting results, we elected to measure media coverage in selected weeks immediately preceding statewide public opinion polls conducted by the Texas Poll. In each quarterly opinion poll, 1,000 randomly-sampled respondents were asked to name the most important problem facing Texas.

As shown in Table I, the proportion who named crime as the most important problem grew from a quite modest two percent in 1992 to double digits a year later. Today, crime continues to hold a commanding position on the state agenda.

Table I
The percentage of respondents who said crime was the most important problem facing Texas.

Date of Poll	
Summer 1992	2%
Fall 1993	15%
Winter 1994	37%
Spring 1994	36%
Summer 1994	29%
Fall 1994	22%
Winter 1995	24%

Because of continuing public concern over crime and because the relationship of mass media content to this public concern is a complex matter, this paper is an interim report of an ongoing project. At this point, we do not have all media content data in hand for the six quarters in which public concern about crime was measured by the Texas Poll at 15 percent or more. This interim report details trends in Texas newspapers over four time periods, trends in local television news over three time periods, and trends in national network coverage over six time periods. Data for additional time periods and for additional media will be added as the project progresses.

Newspapers: We coded all crime-related stories in the *Dallas Morning News* and the *Houston Chronicle* for the week prior to each of four polling dates, as follows:

Time 1: July 25 to 31, 1992
Time 2: October 3 to 9, 1993
Time 3: January 30 to February 5, 1994
Time 4: April 10 to 16, 1994.[2]

Time 1, which occurred before the sudden climb in public concern detected in the polls, was used as a control or benchmark against which changes in coverage could be measured. A total of 947 news stories was coded.

The broadest possible definition of crime was applied in this process. Stories about actual crimes as well as stories about such tangent issues as gun control and prison reform were included within the scope of the study. We assumed that public feelings about these topics would converge into one overarching concern: crime.

Initially, we had approximately 75 categories of crime stories. We collapsed them into the following categories: murder, robbery, gun control, rape, assault, riot, official misconduct, vandalism, police brutality, kidnapping, child abuse, prison/prison reform, drugs/illegal substances, gangs/juvenile crime, crime as a public issue and sexual harassment. Any remaining category with fewer than 10 stories was then collapsed into two additional categories depending on whether or not these remaining stories related to a crime against a person. These last two categories were: "other crimes against person" or "other crimes."

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[2] Eaton (1989) and Winter and Eyal (1981) have suggested in their work that the optimum time to test for agenda-setting effects is in the weeks immediately preceding the test of public opinion.

To measure the attributes of stories, we collected the following data for each news item:

- ***Framing Mechanisms***-- This includes the placement or play of the story (on the page and within the issue), the size of the headline and whether or not the story was augmented with visuals, pull quotes or other graphics that might cause readers to notice the item or give it greater weight or importance.

- ***Site*** -- Whether or not the crime or incident occurred within the circulation area of the newspaper.

- ***Relationship*** -- This measures whether the victim(s) were connected in any way to the perpetrator(s). Three classifications were used: "connected," for instances where they knew each other personally; "unconnected," for instances where they had no personal connection but where the relationship may have put the victim in harm's way; and "random" for random acts of violence. For instance, an assault on a spouse would be "connected," the shooting of a bank clerk during a robbery would be "unconnected," and the victim of a drive-by shooting would be "random."

- ***Sense of Social Distance*** -- This measures whether the average reader would feel personally threatened by the nature of the reported crime. The term "distant" referred to a crime report for which there was great sense of social distance. In other words, "distant" designated a story in which the average person would not feel threatened. The term "close" referred to a report in which the average person would feel threatened. For instance, a story about a series of car jackings downtown would be "close."

- ***Sense of Protection*** -- This is a measure of whether or not the news item gives a sense that the legal system or police had the situation under control. For instance, if the criminal was apprehended or a trial is underway, the story would give a sense of being "protected." On the other hand, a story about a crime where the suspect is unknown or on the loose would give a sense that the public was "unprotected."

Comprehensive coding instructions were developed to improve reliability of interpretations. An intercoder reliability check produced a reliability coefficient of 80.8 percent.

Local Television News: To measure local news crime coverage, we relied on broadcast summaries of local news programming produced by Radio TV Reports of New York and available through the Lexis-Nexis on-line database (RTVRPT). Founded in 1936, Radio TV Reports is part of Competitive Media Reporting. The data base contains synopses of local news programs in 15 national media markets. Unfortunately, the data base has been available on-line only since 1993 for the Dallas market. The Houston market was not added until 1995.

Therefore, to measure local television news coverage, we coded reports for the 5 p.m. newscasts of two Dallas-area stations: the ABC affiliate (WFAA-TV) and the CBS affiliate (KDFW-TV). Again, time periods were picked to coincide with poll dates, as follows:

Time 1: Not Available
Time 2: October 4 to 8, 1993
Time 3: January 30 to February 4, 1994
Time 4: April 11 to 15, 1994.

While every attempt was made to match time periods used in the newspaper coding, on-line news summaries for some dates, especially weekend newscasts, were not available.

We measured the total number of stories in each newscast (excluding weather and sports) and the number of stories relating to crime. Each crime story was coded as to topic, site, relationship, sense of protection, and sense of social distance, using the coding definitions applied to newspapers and explained above.

Network Television News: Finally, we analyzed data collected by *Tyndall Reports* (ADT Research, 1994) on the number of minutes the network news programs devoted to crime over six time periods.

Results and Discussion of Newspaper Findings

Not only did the number of crime stories in the two newspapers increase over the periods studied, but, as was the case in studies by other researchers, the newspaper crime stories we looked at were heavily weighted toward violent crime, particularly murder.

Table II shows the growth in the number of newspaper stories from the control period (Time 1) through the three subsequent time periods.

Table II
Total number of newspaper crime stories in four time periods.

Time Period	Number of Crime Stories
1	205
2	226
3	284
4	232

What was interesting was the way the focus on murder grew over the time periods studied. The percentage of murder stories jumped from 22.5 percent at Time 2 to 35.5 percent at Time 3.

Instead of reporting raw numbers, we calculated Spearman's correlations to demonstrate the trend of change over time. The time periods were treated as scores which were correlated with the frequencies for each variable we tested. Using this method, the higher the correlation, the more the frequencies increased at a steady pace over time. Rank order correlations for each crime category over the four time periods are found in Table III.

Table III

Trends in newspaper crime stories by topic over four time periods

	Assault	**Child Abuse**	**Drugs**	**Fraud**	**Gangs**
Time	.74	.80	.11	.32	.63
	Gun Control	**Kidnapping**	**Murder**	**Official Misconduct**	**Police Brutality**
Time	.40	.40	.60	-.40	-.80
	Prison Reform	**Crime as a Public Issue**	**Rape**	**Riot**	**Robbery**
Time	.95	.32	-.40	-.20	-.40
	Sexual Harassment	**Vandalism**		**OVERALL**	
Time	-.63	.80		.80	

These correlations suggest a pattern of steadily increasing coverage for certain violent and random crimes and criminal issues -- assault, child abuse, gangs, murder and prison reform.

We also looked at the other variables in crime story coverage. Five are particularly interesting. We calculated trends for those stories in and those stories out of the newspaper circulation area over the four time periods. The results were .60 and -.40 respectively. This suggests a shift in focus toward local crime stories.

Table IV shows the trends for these two variables as well as three other personal cues: (1) the sense of the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator (connected, unconnected or random); (2) the sense of social distance between the newspaper reader and the crime (distant or close); and (3) the sense of protection afforded by the legal system (protected or unprotected).

Table IV
Time trends for relationship of victim and perpetrator,
the sense of social distance and the sense of security and location of crime

	Connected	**Unconnected**	**Random**
Time	-.40	.80	.63
	Close	**Distant**	
Time	.74	-.20	
	Protected	**Unprotected**	
Time	.40	.80	
	In Area	**Out of Area**	
Time	.60	-.40	

These correlations suggest that over time there was a steady increase of coverage devoted to crimes for which there was no connection between the perpetrator and the victim (unconnected and random). A steady increase in coverage also was seen for crimes that occurred in the newspaper's circulation area (in area) , crimes that would give the feeling that the legal and police system was not providing protection (unprotected) and those in which the reader might feel personally threatened (close).

We also examined each article for the presence of graphics, photographs, pull quotes and subheads. These elements have been referred to as "framing mechanisms" which serve to emphasize certain stories and frames (Tankard, *et al*, 1991). The time trends for framing mechanisms are shown in Table V.

Table V

Time trends for framing mechanisms: placement on page one of the paper, placement on inside front page, placement above the fold, presence of graphics, photographs, pull quotes and subheads.

	Story on Page One	Story on Inside Front Page	Story Above Fold	
Time	-.20	.80	.60	
	Graphics	**Photographs**	**Pull quotes**	**Subheads**
Time	.40	.40	.80	-.10

These data suggest that some of the framing mechanisms employed by newspapers -- particularly pull quotes, location on the inside front page and placement of the story above the fold -- were used with greater frequency for crime stories over time. Some of this change could be attributed to a change in the newspaper's graphic style. Regardless of the motivation, however, use of such devices would tend to increase the prominence of crime stories over time.

Overall, these findings suggest that between the control or benchmark period (Time 1) and the later periods, the two newspapers changed the nature and scope of their coverage of crime. They not only reported more stories, but the stories were more violent and more often about local crimes. The crimes reported in the news seemed to be more random and the number of stories where the average person would feel personally threatened or unprotected increased.

Finally, these analyses suggest that not only were there more stories, presented in a more threatening manner, but they were given greater graphic play since the use of all but two of the framing mechanisms we measured increased over time. More stories were placed on the inside front pages and above the fold and more were published with accompanying graphics, photographs and pull quotes. If, indeed, such framing mechanisms work as devices of emphasis then we could conclude that crime stories were given more emphasis between Time 1 and Time 4.

Results and Discussion of Findings Relating to Local Television News

Although there was a much smaller universe of crime stories to analyze, the results for the two local Dallas television newscasts mirrored that of the two newspapers. Not only did the number of crime stories aired by the two stations grow, but they consumed a greater portion of the overall newshole, as shown in Table VI. The overall trend in crime coverage is, however, curvilinear.

As with newspapers, the television stories on crime presented a greater sense of being unprotected and threatened. Here the increases not only are sizable, but the trend also is sharply monotonic or near so.

Table VI

Total number of local television crime stories, percentage of all stories that dealt with crime, percentage of crime stories that gave a sense of being "unprotected" and percentage of crime stories in which the average viewer would feel personally threatened "close."

	Number of crime stories	% of total stories that dealt with crime	% of crime stories that were unprotected	% of crime stories that were close
Time 2	11	8.4%	9.1%	36.4%
Time 3	53	28.5%	47%	52.8%
Time 4	19	15.1%	63.2%	52.6%

Results and Discussion of Findings Relating to National Network News

Rather than counting the number of stories, the *Tyndall Reports* (ADT Research 1994) counts time. Results show a steady increase in the number of minutes the three national network evening news shows devote to crime coverage, growing from an aggregate of 956 minutes in 1991 to 2,058 minutes in 1994.

As shown in Table VII, we aggregated monthly totals from Tyndall into six time periods. These time periods represent the three months just before each of six Texas Polls in which the number of respondents who said crime was the most important problem facing Texas was 15 percent or more. The large increase in coverage, beginning in June 1994, may be attributable to extensive national news coverage of the murder trial of O.J. Simpson.

Regardless of the motivation for the change, it is clear that the daily diet of crime coverage dished out on the national television networks is increasing. The correlation between time periods and number of minutes devoted to crime coverage was .60.

Table VII

Total number of minutes devoted to crime coverage on three network evening news programs over six time periods.

Time Period	Months	Minutes of Crime Coverage
1	August, September, October 1993	443
2	November, December 1993 and January 1994	466
3	February, March, April 1994	341
4	May, June, July 1994	674
5	August, September, October 1994	633
6	November , December 1994 and January 1995	534

Comparison Of Crime Coverage With Texas Poll Data

Up to this point, we have described the trends over time in public concern about crime and the trends over time in media coverage of crime. We began with traditional frequency measures of crime coverage in Texas newspapers, local Texas television news and national network news. Both the history of content analysis and the accumulation of agenda-setting studies document the importance of these frequency measures. But because the theory of agenda-setting is about the influence of the media agenda on the public agenda, we extended our analysis beyond frequency measures of crime to the media agenda to look at other cues that may account for and explain the sudden surge of concern about crime to unprecedented levels among Texans.

The three "personal cues" that we added to the traditional agenda-setting dynamic are the degree to which a member of the audience reading or viewing crime stories would feel personally threatened or unprotected and a sense that these stories about crime are especially pertinent because they are from the local area. The final step in the analysis demanded by the agenda-setting model is, of course, to compare the fit between the trends in public opinion and the trends in the media agenda. We began with the newspaper measures, comparing the Texas Poll in Time Periods 1 through 4 with those newspaper variables for which our earlier analysis detected a steady increase over time. A similar analysis, for Time Periods 2 through 4, was also calculated for variables relating to local television news coverage. Results are shown in Tables VIII and IX.

The convergence of these findings is striking and clearly validates both the traditional frequency measures of agenda-setting and the addition of "personal cues" in this analysis to explain the sudden escalation of public concern about crime.

First, for the newspapers the trend in the total number of crime stories perfectly parallels the trends in public opinion (and for four specific categories of crime as well as the topic of prison reform the trends are highly similar). Also showing perfect parallels to public opinion are the trends in stories about (a) crimes in which the perpetrator and victim are unconnected and (b) situations in which the reader would feel unprotected. Showing a near-perfect correspondence to public opinion are the trends in stories characterized by minimal social distance and in stories about local crime.

Similar findings emerge from the local television news analysis. Simple frequency counts, the total number of crime stories and the percentage of crime stories in the newscasts, as well as the personal cue social distance (how personally threatened the viewer would feel) have trends that are in perfect correspondence with the trend of public opinion. In short, these findings suggest that the pace and direction of changes in public attitudes about crime measured by the Texas Poll closely paralleled that of changes in emphasis, topics and style of local media coverage.

In contrast, the trends in network television coverage of crime do not parallel the trends in public opinion in Texas at all. Although more detailed analysis at a later time may reveal a contribution by network television to the rise of public concern about crime, it seems abundantly clear that local media have been the primary agenda-setters for Texans concern about crime.

Table VIII

Correlation of changes in emphasis between Texas Poll results relating to crime and variables measured in newspaper coverage in four time periods.

Description of Variable	Correlation With Texas Poll Data (Spearman Rho)
Total Number of Crime Stories	1.00
Crime Stories Dealing With Assault	.74
Crime Stories Dealing With Child Abuse	1.00
Crime Stories Dealing With Gangs	.90
Crime Stories Dealing With Murder	.80
Crime Stories Dealing With Prison Reform	.60
Perpetrator and Victim Were Unconnected	1.00
Reader Would Feel Personally Threatened (Close)	.94
Reader Would Feel Unprotected	1.00
Crime Occurred In Circulation Area (In Area)	.80

Table IX

Correlation of changes in emphasis between Texas Poll results relating to crime and variables measured in local television news coverage in three time periods.

Description of Variable	Correlation With Texas Poll Data (Spearman Rho)
Total Number of Crime Stories	1.00
Percentage of Stories Relating to Crime	1.00
Viewer Would Feel Unprotected	.50
Viewer Would Feel Personally Threatened (Close)	1.00

Conclusion and Implications

Although we have data for only three time periods for television and four for newspaper crime coverage, we felt it worthwhile to make this interim report on an ongoing project since our initial analysis seemed to identify some key explanatory variables.

Our findings to date suggest that the way the media told the crime story changed dramatically in two Texas cities, a change that coincided with an almost unprecedented growth in the public's concern about crime. Changes in the way crime was covered, taken together, suggest reasons for the public to feel a greater sense of concern about crime. An argument can be made that when individuals hear about crimes that are violent and close to home and where the report suggests they are not protected by the system or where they feel personally threatened, this kind of information would be translated by them into heightened concern about crime.

This analysis, however, stops short of a full understanding of the convergence of other media phenomenon that may be affecting the polls. Future research must take into account not only traditional news sources, but encompass a full understanding of the public media diet. Ranging beyond the mainstream daily media, this diet often includes the full spectrum of television news magazines and reality shows, which frequently blur the boundary between information and entertainment, as well as the entrenched entertainment role of crime in film and television programming.

In addition, greater attention needs to be paid to an emerging genre of part-news/part-entertainment shows referred to collectively as "reality shows." This genre blends the reality of the news with the entertainment of fiction.

Beginning with *America's Most Wanted* in 1988, similar shows have shown up on all four networks and several others are in syndication. Only three reality-type shows were broadcast in the 25 years before *America's Most Wanted* aired. Since 1988, the number has grown to 23.[3]

The bread-and-butter of such shows, and other forms of tabloid television, is crime -- dramatic, violent crime. Although their research was done in defense of the studio's own reality film, *Natural Born Killers*, Warner Brothers' documentation of four month's content of these shows in 1994 is chilling:

> From Diane Sawyer's interview of Charles Manson to Stone Phillips' interview of Jeffrey Dahmer -- between Feb. 17 and May 27 of this year alone -- 'reality-based' tabloid network news shows such as 'Inside Edition,' 'Hard Copy,' 'A Current Affair' and 'Prime Time Live' broadcast 45 stories that graphically focused on murders, spree killers and their victims. (Weinraub, 1994)

The research presented here is but one clue in understanding the paradox now before media scholars. Before we truly understand the breath and scope of the media's role in heightened public concern about crime, scholars will have to adopt strategies to explore more than news coverage.

We believe full understanding lies in research that expands beyond news to encompass that which is played out as fantasy as well as reality, news as well as entertainment. To understand the phenomenon, scholars likewise will have to blend theories, taking part of the answer from agenda-setting theory (which deals primarily with news) and part of the answer from cultivation theory (which deals primarily with entertainment).

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[3] This number is based on a list we compiled of all television shows that dealt with real crimes, criminals or victims but are not regular newscasts. We did not include documentaries or newsmagazines but we restricted our listing to shows that dealt predominantly with crime. Much of our information was obtained from the fall preview issues of *TV Guide* or from *The Complete Directory to Prime Time Network TV Shows: 1946- Present* (Brooks and Marsh, 1992).

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Stereotypes in the Media:

So What?

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Stereotypes in the Media: So What?

Abstract

This paper is an attempt to provide a satisfying theoretical framework for how stereotypical representations in media texts can link social-level racial myths with individual-level cognition. Barthes' theories about semiotic signs and myths are examined and linked with models from cognitive psychology concerning human memory and processing of categorical information. Using language as a medium, Livingstone's interpretive framework is proposed as the link that connects mythical social understandings with real cognitive processing phenomena.

Stereotypes in the Media: So What?

All good research should answer the very basic question, "So what?" The answer to this question not only justifies why one spent the time and money on the project, but also why any of the rest of us should be concerned about what the research uncovered. It tells us why the research is important. In this paper I examine a very basic "So What" question concerning society, race, and the media: Racial stereotypes in the media: So What? Why are stereotypes in the media important, and why should we care?

At first glance, it seems absurd that such questions need to be answered. It is almost a truism that racial stereotypes in the media are important - so much research has been done about stereotypes in the media that they *must* be important. Similarly, there is the intuitively appealing notion that stereotypes in the media are harmful. Since stereotypes are usually viewed only as presumably false over-generalizations made by socially dominant groups about socially oppressed groups and are extremely prevalent in the media, they *must* be bad. But *why?* If so many people consciously disavow any belief in or endorsement of the stereotypes that circulate through society, why are they important, and why are they bad?

These are important questions to answer for several reasons. Critical scholars and others who are concerned about the ideological and social effects of stereotypical media representations need to be able to point to more concrete mechanisms than simply "learning" or "modeling" if they expect their arguments to carry any weight outside of the academic world. Conversely, researchers in the empirical tradition must acknowledge the very real ideological effects that may arise from these representations.

This paper is an attempt at providing a framework for answering these questions. After briefly considering other approaches to the importance of stereotypes, I will ground this research in a broader perspective of social reality beliefs. Since stereotypes involve an evaluative component as well as a descriptive one (Seiter, 1986), I will also discuss the relation of social reality beliefs to conceptions of social power. The heart of this paper, however, is an hypothesized theoretical framework for connecting the social circulation of racial understandings to the cognitions of individuals via language, using Livingstone's (1990; 1992) template of textual interpretation. I will conclude, then, by suggesting what this all means, why stereotypes in the media may be important, and what we can do about it.

Roughly speaking, answers to the question "Why are stereotypes in the media important?" fall into two broad categories: 1) Stereotypes are important because of what they do, and 2) stereotypes are important because of what they mean. Interestingly enough, these two categories also roughly parallel the division between traditional/empirical researchers and critical/cultural scholars. I realize that this is a gross over-generalization, but I use it because it suggests that the two schools of thought will ask different questions about stereotypes and the media. This is important, because the answers they come up will tend to lie in different levels of analysis - one individual, the other societal - and thus the connections between them can be complex.

Much of the empirical research on stereotypes has been concerned with the effects stereotypical representations of minorities in the media may have on audiences, or assuming these effects and trying to empirically verify the presence or absence of the stereotypes in particular media texts. It is often assumed that the repeated presentations of social groups in particular ways in the media can have affects on how audience members think about people in those groups. Such assumptions have often gone untested, however, as researchers instead concentrate on showing that particular social groups are overwhelmingly portrayed in stereotypical manners.

Cultivation research, for example, is one area that is explicitly concerned with repeated exposure to media content and subsequent effects on social reality beliefs, although most work on the cultivation effect has involved exposure to media violence and beliefs about violence in the world. Although I believe in the basic tenet of cultivation - that long-term, repeated exposure is where communication effects are to be found - I believe that Gerber and his colleagues have done little to support their cause. Cultivation research assumes a lot - it assumes that only overall media exposure is important to belief formation, that there is no room for individual interpretation of media content, and that some kind of "learning" goes on (for example, see Gerbner *et. al.*, 1980). The psychological mechanisms involved in cultivation have to be laid out, which I attempt to do later in this paper, or else the whole enterprise is subject to questions of spuriousness (Hawkins and Pingree, 1990).

The critical/cultural school, on the other hand, approaches the importance of stereotypes in the media from the perspective that they signify racial understandings and social relations in the society at large, as well as signifying the power relations within a society. The word "signify" is used quite deliberately and should not be taken to mean "reflect," since "reflection" suggests that the media simply act as a "mirror" or a "window" to the world and any stereotypes they contain are simply those present in the world at large. "Signify" is used because the word suggests a process of selection and exclusion, as well as the re-presentation of something. Crucial to this is the idea that there is no absolute reality in the empirical sense. Instead, our idea of what is "real" is constructed from the social world around us, a social world that includes different social groups, with different power relations between them, and the media.

The contribution of the media to people's image of the rest of the world was recognized early in this century when Walter Lippman talked about the "pictures in our heads." These pictures are formed not only by our personal experiences, but also by what we learn from other people. Later, Kenneth Boulding (1956) further discussed the "image" that we all keep in our thoughts about the rest of the world. Boulding voiced some apprehension at the fact that as people become more dependent on the media for their information about the world, the possibility for erroneous images of the world increases. While we have many images about the world, very few of them are actually based on personal experiences - one single person simply doesn't have the time, resources, or capacity to go out and learn everything there is to learn firsthand. Consequently, much of what we "know" about the world comes from agreeing with other people that a particular fact is "true," what can be called "agreement reality," (Babbie, 1992). Both Lippman and Boulding realized that in light of the fact that much of our knowledge - those images and pictures in our heads - come not from personal experiences but from other people, the media could play a big role in providing some of these images and pictures that make up our agreement reality. And since it is these images of the world that people base their behavior on, and not necessarily any "objective reality," the possibility for serious media-based consequences is great.

In this context, social reality may be thought of that large portion of unverified information that is shared by us and by the others around us, and that as they seem to have the same information and ideas that we do, we come to believe that everyone "ought to" see things the way we do (McLeod and Chaffee, 1972). This conception of social reality is directed toward the individual, but the phrase "social reality" can be looked at in terms of *social* reality or social *reality*. "The first group takes the cognitive system of the *individual* as its unit of analysis, and lets social reality refer to the person's frame of reference in a social situation," (McLeod and Chaffee, 1972: 52). The second group, "examine the *social system* as their unit of analysis, and look on social reality as the actual agreement or consensus among members of that system," (McLeod and Chaffee, 1972: 52). In this second vein, Gerbner places social reality in relation to culture, where culture, "is a symbolic organization that cultivates our conceptions of existence, priorities, values, and relationships... [it] provides the overall framework in which we imagine what we do not encounter directly, and interpret what we do encounter directly," (Gerbner, 1990: 251). Thus, social reality is a very important construct determining human interaction, and human interaction with the communication media.

Stereotypes can be thought of, then, as a particular subset of social reality beliefs - they are understandings about particular social groups that we have learned from our social world. Such meanings and representations are not universally agreed upon, however. Marx would remind us that the dominant understandings of a society tend to be the understandings of the dominant social groups of that society. Those who are in a dominant social position have the power to define the dominant understandings, and thus have tremendous ability to make their definitions appear natural and unarguable. This is what Roland Barthes referred to as the power of myth, and myth, he said, is a system of communication that can turn History into Nature

(Barthes, 1973). In other words, myths take social/cultural differences and make those differences appear natural. As this will be important for my theoretical framework, this deserves further discussion.

For Barthes, the analysis of myth begins with semiology, the analysis of signs. Signs can be thought of as elemental units of conveying meaning, and all models of meaning basically share a similar form (Fiske, 1990). A *sign* is the associative relation between a *signifier*, which is the representation of a physical entity provided to us by our five sense, and its *signified*, which is the mental concept we think of when we encounter that representation. (This particular conceptualization of signs is from the linguist Ferdinand de Saussure; it is the one Barthes used, so I will use it here). To make this clearer, I will borrow an example from Fiske (1990: 44):

O X

These are two marks on a piece of paper - one is a closed curve; the other, a pair of straight lines bisecting each other. If this was the beginning of a game of tic-tac-toe, their meaning would end there. However, if this is read as a word, then they form a sign, composed of the patterns of dark and light from these marks that hit the rods and cones of your retina (the signifier), and the mental image of a particular type of animal (the signified). The relation of your concept of "ox" and the physical reality of oxen is what Saussure calls "signification," and it is how we give meaning to the world (Fiske, 1990: 44). This is the function of language[1].

For Barthes, however, this is not where the ascription of meaning ends. Myth gets its meaning by taking that which is a sign and making it a signifier in a second-order relation. That is, it takes something that already has a meaning "based" on some sort of "reality" and makes it a signifier for another meaning. Words, pictures, objects - they may all be signs in various ways, but myth makes them all words in a metalanguage, as they come to mean something else. As myth does this, it does not appropriate all the meaning from the original sign. Instead, myth is selective. It appropriates some meaning and disregards others, and so what myth offers is not so much reality but

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[1] Language in this sense is any set of signs that conveys meaning to members of a culture. Thus, in addition to written and verbal forms, language in this sense can include hand and facial gestures, video effects, musical moods - in short, anything that systematically conveys meaning.

> a certain knowledge of reality... In fact, the knowledge contained in a mythical concept is confused, made of yielding, shapeless associations. One must firmly stress this open character of the concept; it is not at all an abstract, purified essence; it is a formless, unstable, nebulous condensation, whose utility and coherence are above all due to its function. (Barthes, 1982: 105).

By doing this, myth takes away the history of a sign and distorts it into something vaguely familiar but nonetheless ambiguous.

Barthes notes that just as a particular mental concept can be represented by a number of signifiers, so too can myth be activated by a number of signs. In fact, for Barthes, myth *only* exists across a large number of signs, and no one sign can embody the whole of a myth. Myth is too nebulous to be captured by a single sign. And since myth is so nebulous, the connections between these various signs and myth need not be made explicit. One of the consequences of this, Barthes asserts, is that the mythical meaning of the original signifier becomes naturalized. A further, more ominous consequence is that myth thus becomes depoliticized speech.

> Myth does not deny things, on the contrary, its function is to talk about them; simply, it purifies them, it makes them innocent, it gives them a natural and eternal justification, it gives them a clarity which is not that of an explanation but that of a statement of fact (Barthes, 1982: 132).

I've included this discussion of myth because Barthes' conception of myth has clear links to the study of stereotypes. I think it can be reasonably argued that racial stereotypes are manifestations of racial myths. Seiter (1986) laments that not enough researchers bother to define what they mean when they use the term "stereotype," and that this makes interpreting conclusions across studies difficult. I intentionally omitted a definition of "stereotype" until I could develop the appropriate foundation, but now that I have done that, let me define a racial stereotype as *the operationalization of racial myths as social reality beliefs concerning members of racial groups based on perceived group affiliations*. Such a definition highlights the constructed nature of racial stereotypes: They rely on myths for their grounding, yet the myths themselves are not grounded on anything more substantial than a loose association of nebulous, dehistorized signs. Since they are social reality beliefs, they concern that "large amount of unverified information" that people generally accept because the people around them accept it. Also, since they are social reality beliefs, that means they can be viewed as from the *social* reality perspective (the beliefs about the world by individuals) and the social *reality* perspective (the agreement of individuals in a society about the nature of the world). That suggests that there is the possibility for both misperception (certainly a negative consequence) and resistance (certainly a positive consequence). If the "people around you" *don't* share that particular set of unverified information, then that suggests room for argumentation with the stereotypes, and hence the myth.

Before I can begin to lay out the proposed framework for interpreting the importance of stereotypes, I have to completely change gears and delve into cognitive psychology. I do this for two reasons: 1) Because it is important to remember that stereotypes and the racial myths they depend on are not entities in themselves that circulate in some abstract societal level of analysis independent of the individuals who use them, but instead exist only because people with brains interact with them every day; and 2) because my framework depends on one particular model of human memory, one among several that are hotly debated in the psychological literature. While it could be argued that any model of human memory could be worked into the framework I propose, I feel that the one that I discuss fits particularly well, and best explains how racialized myth can manifest itself in the everyday workings of the brain and hence our everyday interpretation of the world.

When considering human memory, several important questions have to be addressed: How do we encode the stimuli our five senses encounter into memories we can store? How do we store those memories, and where? How do we find a memory once it has been stored? The answers psychological researchers have proposed have been many and varied, and have led to intense debates: Do we encode everything we encounter, or are we selective encoders? Do we store semantic (i.e. categorical and conceptual) and episodic (i.e. personally encountered event) information in different structures, or in different ways within the same structure? Do we store all relevant memory for something in discrete locations (i.e. neural nodes) or is it distributed across many locations? When retrieving "relevant" memories, are all memories considered relevant, or can the context connected with those memories limit what is recalled? As it is beyond the scope and purpose of this paper to discuss alternative models, I will not attempt to justify why the particular model of human memory used was chosen over others (for a terrific discussion of human memory and the competing models developed to explain it, see Greene, 1992). For the purposes of this paper, however, it is necessary to answer the above questions so that the reader can understand how individuals may encoded, recall, and interact with stereotypes.

The model that I think best explains the functioning of human memory can be called an Instance/PDP model. "Instance" refers to the way in which perceived stimuli are stored, while "PDP" stands for parallel distributed processing and refers to the way in which the traces arrange and store semantic and episodic information. The model is based on the work of Logan (1988 - for automaticity and the way in which stimuli are perceived and encoded), Hintzman (1986 - for how semantic information can be derived from episodic instances), and McClelland and Rumelhart (1985 - for how trace conglomerations can store different types of information, as well as the auto-associator).

When a person perceives something, he or she does so via the five senses. These senses convert physical stimuli into electrical impulses and then sends those impulses to the brain. This much is known, but what happens next is a matter of speculation. Mental activity (i.e. what one is thinking) can, in some ways, also be considered a "sense," and for my purposes will be included as a source of stimulus to be encoded in memory. According to the instance theory, every stimulus a person attends to is automatically stored in the brain as a *trace* (Logan, 1988). The trace is basically a recording of the physical features that were present in the stimulus (as recorded by the five senses), and can be thought of as a series of plusses and minus representing the perceived presence or absence of the elemental features of that stimulus (elemental features would include horizontal lines, vertical lines, color, depth, frequency of sound, etc., and a blank would represent that a particular feature was not attended to - Hintzman, 1986). An analogy might be the way audio and visual information is stored digitally, where information is broken down digitally into a series of ones and zeroes, and a trace could be represented graphically by something like Figure 1.

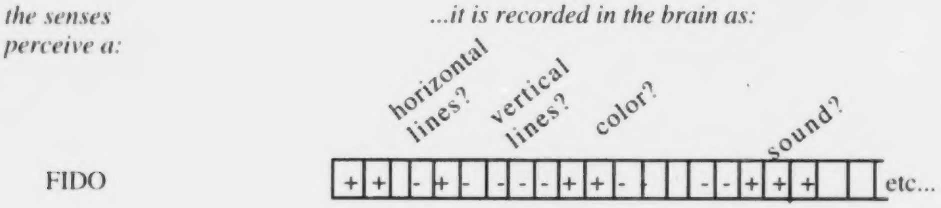

Figure 1 - a trace for the perception of a particular dog named Fido (see Hintzman, 1986).

In addition to an attended stimulus being automatically encoded in memory, every time that stimulus is perceived, all relevant traces previously encoded are also automatically retrieved from memory. This retrieval does not necessarily mean that it is automatically implanted in consciousness, but rather that it is primed and can affect subsequent processing. This obligatory encoding and retrieval does not mean that every stimulus will be encoded or retrieved equally well - that is dependent on the amount of attention a person paid to that stimulus at the time of encoding (Logan, 1986). However, the more times that a stimulus is perceived, the easier it will be to retrieve it, and with consistent, repeated exposure, the retrieval will become automatic (Logan, 1986). Automaticity in this sense means that a particular process occurs without conscious awareness or control, and is the result of repeated consistent exposure. This will be important later.

Memory for an instant[2], then, is stored as a series of traces that record what the senses perceived. Meaning is presumably derived from these traces, although the exact process that governs the extraction of meaning from traces is unclear[3]. While instance theory would appear to cover episodic memory well, it can also cover memory for semantic (that is, conceptual) information also. Since semantic information is conceptual (for example, our knowledge about what makes up a stereotype for a particular social group) and concerns our knowledge for things we haven't directly experienced, many memory theorists have suggested different structures of memory in order to handle it. However, Hintzman (1986) suggests that instance theory can handle semantic information, and suggests that while episodic information can be thought of as being stored within a trace, semantic information is stored across traces. According to Hintzman, categorical information, for example, is derived from all the individual traces that contain examples of that category. When the category itself needs to be accessed, it is the conglomeration of all of these specific examples that are accessed and utilized. Using a mathematical computer model, Hintzman (1986) has shown how a system can describe very accurately the prototype for a category by being shown and encoding only distortions of that prototype. That is, the system can describe the prototype without ever having witnessed it by simply conglomerating the individual distortions. Consider the earlier example of encoding the trace of Fido. If one had encoded traces for Fido, Spot, Benji, Rex, Snoopy, etc., then the conglomeration of all of these would produce an echo for the prototype "dog," (I will ignore here the role of linguistic learning - it will addressed later). This, too, will be important later.

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[2] What exactly an instance *is*, or how long it is, is a matter of some debate in the psychology literature also.

[3] I say "presumably" because debate rages in the psychological literature about exactly what meaning *is*, how it relates to the encoding of stimulus, or how it arises from perceptions, traces, and symbols. It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss this important and fascinating debate, so for further reading see Searle (1990), Churchland & Churchland (1990), Mandler (1992), and Glenberg (in press).

PDP memory models like McClelland and Rumelhart's (1985) also rely on mathematics to demonstrate for their descriptive power. The strength of PDP models is that rather than storing traces in different locations, they "superimpose" traces and can still account for both semantic and episodic information (McClelland and Rumelhart, 1985: 160). This is a strength because, in addition to greatly enhancing storage capacity, the model is more parsimonious than neural node models and better accounts for human data. An interesting feature in the McClelland and Rumelhart (1985) PDP model of memory is that it can be used to associate very different sets of stimuli, so that after the system has been exposed to associated stimuli often enough, it will, like Pavlov's dog, *automatically* associate one set of stimuli with the other.

Up until now, I have avoided the bringing language into this model, but its inclusion can no longer be ignored. Hintzman explicitly refuses to include language in his model, but I would argue that it can be accommodated quite easily. Language is, after all, a set of aural stimuli (in the case of spoken language) or visual stimuli (for written language), and thus could be easily accommodated by the definition of trace that he uses. In fact, the McClelland and Rumelhart (1985) use a very Hintzman-like feature list as well, but include a place for language in that feature list by including a label. The question of "How do we know which label to apply to what features?" can then be answered via the auto-associator: we come to associate particular symbols and sounds (language) with particular lists of features (meaning) by repeated, consistent exposure. As a person learns language, they associate the sounds or symbols with the "meaning," until the association of the words with the meanings is automatic. From this perspective, then, language is extremely important to learning and knowledge, and this is why I think Hintzman can't dismiss the confounding affect of language.

Hintzman also would not approve of my using his model in a paper about stereotypes, because he insists that semantic representations encoded in memory probably aren't as important as abstracting them from episodic traces for three reasons: 1) "Abstractions derived from one's direct experience may be encoded only rarely;" 2) even if they were, they play an insignificant role since they would be a few traces lost among the many that a person has already encoded; and 3) even if they do play a significant role, it is important to determine when they do play this role and when they do not (Hintzman, 1986: 423). Hintzman concludes that "to the extent that abstract knowledge as such is stored in memory, it has no special status or function. All experiences to which one attends are encoded as episodic traces," (Hintzman, 1986: 423).

What Hintzman overlooks is the fact that much of what we humans attend to has been "abstracted" for us. Learning abstract concepts happens all the time, because we communicate via language and language is abstract to begin with. While Hintzman might argue that traces of abstract concepts (like what is a dog, for example) are insignificant compared to the many experiences we have encoded (with dogs), I would argue that much if not most of our experiences with semantic concepts are not via direct experience but by vicarious experiencing via shared knowledge. That is, to have an idea of what a dog is, you not only abstract from all the traces of your personal encounters with dogs, but also from all the traces you have of seeing the word "dog" in print and thinking of a dog, hearing the word "dog," as a youngster learning that "dog" was a word that began with the letter "d," watching Lassie on television, seeing Alpo ads in magazines, seeing paintings of dogs, etc... that is, the sum of all your experience, direct or otherwise, with our culture's shared understanding of what a dog is. These are all encounters that we have experienced, mind you, and so each one has produced an episodic trace in memory. If, however, an echo of "all that is dog" is then subsequently produced and encoded as well, then many of the traces in memory will be "abstract," as many of them will be descriptions of the prototype rather than distortions of it. Rather than abstracted, semantic traces being lost in a sea of experienced episodic traces, the reverse may be true - at least for those of us who've never had a dog.

What emerges from this discussion of memory, then, is the importance of language and context. As language is learned, particular sets of stimuli (encoded in memory in traces) become automatically associated with particular words and phrases. Recall that automaticity, in the psychological sense, is something that develops with repeated and consistent exposure, and once it is achieved, it occurs relatively effortlessly and without conscious control or awareness. Since language is something that we learn via repetition and consistency, and fluency represents the unconscious and effortless use of language, it seems reasonable to conclude that the use of language to access meaning quickly becomes an automatic process. Since traces presumably include all the information that was attended to, the traces contain a lot of context that was encoded in memory as well. This suggests not only that what you label a "thing" could be important in determining what features you attend to and which you ignore, but also that over time *contexts that occur frequently would be automatically associated as well.* That is, particular language would automatically prime not only what that language "means," but also any frequently occurring context that language has been encountered with as well. Thus, in addition to the "meaning" of language being available for subsequent cognitive processing, a number of "related" meanings - derived from encoded context - would be primed as well. Furthermore, this automatic contextual priming is only related to the "meaning" of the language insofar as it has often been encoded at the same time the language has been encoded or accessed. Hence, while it often may be, their is no logical necessity for the context to be explicitly related to the language.

If this discussion of the cognitive association of language and context sounds vaguely similar to Barthes' discussion of how signs can connote not only their explicit meaning but also the myths associated with them, the similarity is purely intentional. I can now begin to answer the central question of importance I posed in the beginning of the paper: *Racial stereotypes in the media are important because they are a significant contributor to the maintenance of racial myths by consistently and repeatedly offering associations between language (in the forms of signs) and context (myths) that are consistent with these myths.* This has two important results: 1) With repeated exposure, automaticity between certain signs and certain myths will develop; and 2) since automatically primed contexts are available for subsequent processing, myths will affect the processing of subsequent information.

A caveat should be immediately added: I will not say that the media are the only source of myth-consistent information, nor will I say they are the most important. Family and educational institutions I think are at least as important from the perspective of an individual learning language and the context surrounding it, and clearly as one grows older friends and co-workers also become influential. This having been said, the media are important purveyors of this information not only because they are often used by people, but also because the media do consistently and repeatedly incorporate signs that connote racial myths. If repeated exposure simply adds more relevant traces that will be conglomerated for interpretation, and repeated exposure of these stereotypes in a wide variety of contexts (news, drama, comedy, music, and sports, for example) increases the linguistic cues that can be used to access these traces, then clearly the media become an important purveyor of stereotypes.

A second caveat that I feel is important to add is that I do not mean to imply a conscious or conspiratorial use of racial myths by those in the media. While clearly the link between pejorative racial epithets and racial myths is relatively explicit and can be assumed to include some amount of intent, the link between, for example, the six o-clock news report of a gang-related shooting in (predominantly black) north Philadelphia and myths about the black man as beast is less explicit and presumably without intent. However, for this framework, the presence of myth-consistent signs in the media is what is important, not so much intent behind their presence,

What this framework now needs is to make explicit the link between the existence of these myths in the media and how they find themselves into peoples' cognitions. A link must be made between these two - simply assuming exposure is not enough -- or else this theoretical framework would be open to one of the criticisms of cultivation research, namely spuriousness. The link, I believe, comes from the work of Sonia Livingstone (1990; 1992). She proposes first of all that the proper analogy to use between viewers of television content and that content itself is that of a reader and a text, an analogy that I will use for the rest of this paper[4]. She favors this analogy because it implies that the act of consuming television content is a much more active and engaging process than "viewer" suggests. Similarly, the use of the term "text" implies that media content is much more complex and open to differing interpretations than "message" suggests. Also, by "text" I mean the whole arsenal of signs that can be used to convey meaning (for example, the perimeter haziness in a visual frame that connotes a "flashback" or "dreaming"), not just words.

Livingstone's basic framework is that how people interpret a media text is based on a negotiation between qualities in the text and qualities in the reader. Qualities in the text would include such things as how that text is structured, the form of the text, its degree of openness (see below), and more importantly for our discussion, what sorts of social understandings are infused in the language of the text. Reader qualities would basically include everything the individual reader brings with him or her at that time - cognitive skills, past experience with the medium, a particular emotional state, and more importantly for this discussion, a social history and all the memory traces connected with it. The interpretation that comes out of this is the result of the text pulling meaning in some directions and the reader working the meaning in other directions. Pingree (1992) has refereed to this process (perhaps more accurately) as a tug-of-war. And like a tug-of-war, both sides are on equal footing and (presumably) evenly matched - the text initially has just as much control over the interpretation that the reader will end up with as the reader does.

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[4] Although Livingstone designed her framework specifically around particular television texts (soap operas), I think it can be usefully applied to all media texts.

This suggests that media texts can be read in more than one way. The degree to which a media text supports this "differential reading" is the degree to which it is open or closed (Eco, 1965). Fiction, in this sense, is generally thought to be more open - that is, more open to varied readings - than nonfiction (news, for example). While the openness or closedness of a text can be an important structural quality of the text that can influence the subsequent interpretation, it is important to keep in mind that the reader can be just as varied. Livingstone (1992) suggests that some readers can be uncreative when it comes to interpreting a text, while others can be very creative. The result of this tug-of-war thus falls somewhere between the two poles, and is the particular interpretation of the text that the reader ultimately makes and stores in memory. Variations between interpretations along this "scale" are analogous to Hall's (1973) notions of dominant readings (interpretations that are closer to the textual interpretation and presumably demonstrate little creativity on the part of the reader), subordinate readings (interpretations that are the result of equal tugging between a text and a creative reader), and oppositional readings (interpretations that are far from the intended reading of the text by very creative and active readers).

With two continuous variables interacting like this, it may first seem like any interpretation is possible, and that there should be as many interpretations as their are readers. In addition to not be logically necessary, the number of interpretations that can result is limited by several important factors: 1) The people who put media texts together usually want the readers to get their message, so they have an incentive to structure texts in a way that readers can understand them without too much activity (Livingstone, 1992); 2) similarly, readers wish to get meaning out of texts, so they will use the structures presented them in order to try to find meaning; and 3) perhaps most importantly, the medium common to text and reader is language, and language limits the range of possible interpretations. Thus, while variation in the interpretations of media texts is possible, the range is by no means limitless, and is unlikely even to be very large (Pingree and Hawkins, 1992).

Once again, language is very important, and I believe that the link between the racial myths that circulate in society and the cognitions of individuals that are related to them occurs via the Livingstonian negotiation of interpretation using language as the medium. To put it another way, using the Pingree analogy, language is the rope in the tug-of-war: It is the one thing that connects the two opposing forces. Language is what connects particular understandings of the social world (discourse) with the cognitive labels that are used to organize specific memory traces of an individual.

With language playing such a central role, I must now try to explain what I mean by it, as I have been rather loose with the term throughout this paper. Earlier, I noted that "language," when used in terms of television, could include any sign used to convey meaning. Indeed, on both sides of the equation (inside the text and inside the reader), I still intend language to mean the set of signs that we as human beings use to convey meaning. However, during the negotiation of meaning, language here means simply the signifi*er* ***not*** the signifi*ed*. The *signifiers* used in language (the physical sounds or visual lines and curves) are the common rope between the text and the reader, and the struggle develops over what signifieds are to be attached. The text determines the signifiers used, but it has no control over the signifieds the reader attaches to it. Again, because we share a common language and share a great deal of social reality beliefs, the two will often converge. Since the signifieds a person attaches to signifiers, however, are learned and encoded as traces with a whole lifetime's worth of context, the particular inflection of meaning that a person creates from a particular sign can be different than what the text intended. While the minuscule difference between inflections of a signified from a signifier may not be important by themselves, since language consists of a string of many signifiers, differences can compound into noticeable variations in interpretation. Thus, it is the form of the language that is common to the text and the reader, and variation develops out of the differences between the meanings attached to that form.

Language performs this linking function because individuals use language to associate particular labels with particular (personal) meanings and particular personal experiences. Since the memory model that I'm working from believes that the conglomeration of all relevant memory traces is accessed whenever a particular trace-relevant stimulus is attended to, language can thus determine which relevant memory traces will be called into mind and which will be ignored. Therefore, language can influence the interpretation of a particular media text by influencing which relevant memory traces will be used to interpret that text and which will not. However, since this works based on the linguistic labels specific individuals use to code their *personal* memory traces, the language used in a media text can call to mind different relevant traces for different people. These need not mean that every individual have a unique understanding of the every situation - we are, after all, social beings and tend to experience the world with other people. It is reasonable to assume that people who share certain experiences and backgrounds will share certain understandings of the world, and hence will tend to make similar interpretations of texts.

It is important to keep in mind that the media do not reflect the world in any empirical sense, but instead help construct and maintain it by *re*-presenting particular meanings and understandings of "reality." The media are part of the larger social process that constructs and encourages some meanings (generally those of dominant social groups) over others (generally socially subordinate groups), and it does this via discourse (language that is infused with particular meanings [and myths] and not others). Yet despite their clear connections with the dominant groups of society, media texts are not necessarily *dominating*. Members of a society whose material circumstances or experience do not necessarily reflect dominant cultural understandings can read the same media texts quite differently. As O'Sullivan *et .al.* (1983) and Van Dijk (1993) note, the individual is the site where discursive struggle takes place. Often members of those subordinated groups that are being defined in particular ways will attempt to construct and re-present themselves in a different way, which is how discursive struggle arises - a struggle over how the world is defined, understood, and interpreted through discourse. Since it is in the individual that meaning is made, and meaning is made via language not discourse, different meanings can be made from the same language. They may use the same words, but the meanings - the discourse - will be different.

Recall that I said racial stereotypes in the media are important because they are a significant contributor to the maintenance of racial myths by consistently and repeatedly offering associations between language (in the forms of signs) and context (myths) that are consistent with these myths. Also, with repeated exposure, automaticity between certain signs and certain myths will develop, and since automatically primed contexts are available for subsequent processing, myths will affect the processing of subsequent information. Since it is reasonable to assume that automaticity affects the bond between a signifier and a signified just as much as between a sign and a context, and in light of the Livingstone framework and the commonality of the signifier, it can be added that *racial stereotypes in the media strengthen the link between particular signifiers and particular signifieds, thus strengthening the ability of signs to carry racial myths*.

Thus, for the average white viewer who grew up in a typical manner, this framework suggests that every encounter with a myth-congruent stereotypical representation in the media should not only automatically prime the myth, but then affect subsequent processing in a myth-congruent manner, and it should do so quite automatically and without the individuals conscious awareness or control. An interesting speculation to be sure, but there is some empirical support. In a study by Patricia Devine (1989, study 2), subjects (all of whom were white) were first primed by being shown a set of words (consistent with the stereotype of blacks) below the subject's threshold for conscious awareness. That is, subjects saw the words, but they were flashed so quickly that subjects could not consciously identify or recall them. In what subjects believed to be an unrelated task, subjects were asked to read a paragraph about a racially unspecified person engaging in ambiguously hostile behaviors and then evaluate that person. What Devine found was that when subconsciously primed with racial stereotype-congruent stimulus, both prejudiced and non-prejudiced subjects subsequently made stereotype-congruent evaluations of the racially-unspecified target person. Furthermore, although the prime words specifically avoided any reference to hostility (part of the stereotype of black men), subjects nonetheless appeared to activate that portion of the stereotype in evaluating the target paragraph. She suggests that stereotypes are so well learned that they become automatically triggered in individuals whenever a person from that particular group is attended to, a conclusion that the framework proposed in this paper supports.

Although struggle and resistance to the myths carried by some signs is certainly possible under this framework, the pervasiveness of myth, including in the media, suggests that this will be no easy task. Furthermore, results like Devine's (1989, study 2) can understandably make one pessimistic. However, Devine also gives us cause for optimism. In another study (Devine, 1989, study 3), she asked subjects to list in one minute as many terms, both socially acceptable and not, they could think of for the group black Americans. Shortly afterwards, subjects were given ten minutes to complete a thought-listing task. While both low-prejudiced and high-prejudiced subjects came up with similar numbers of pejorative and non-pejorative terms in the first task (reflecting the automatic and pervasive nature of the stereotype), there were significant differences in the thought-listing results. High-prejudiced subjects were much more likely to include stereotype-relevant thoughts than low-prejudiced subjects, despite the fact that the stereotype had been primed in each of them and that their label-listing task demonstrated no significant differences. Devine concludes from this study that low-prejudiced subjects were engaging in controlled processing to suppress the automatically activated stereotype. "Moreover, low-prejudiced subjects appeared reluctant to ascribe traits to the group as a whole," (Devine, 1989: 14), a result that also supports my proposed framework, as it suggests that differences in the *conceptual* notion of "black Americans" on the semantic level exist between low- and high-prejudiced subjects.

As Seiter (1986) points out, much of the empirical research of social psychologists tends to concentrate on the descriptive character of stereotypes while ignoring the evaluative component. This is a serious oversight (not one made by Devine, however), since it ignores the importance of ideology and the power to define inherent in stereotypes. Seiter (1986) also points out that most researchers tend to focus strictly on minority stereotypes and their relation to implicitly white audiences. By doing so, Seiter argues, scholars overlook the importance of majority stereotypes and how media texts interact with non-white audiences. One strength of the framework that I propose is that it can accommodate both of these criticisms. The evaluative component was demonstrated by the Devine (1989) study and can be explained in terms of the framework as further context consistently and repeatedly included in the portrayal of social groups in media texts. As for stereotypes about whites, the proposed model works just the same.

One interesting result of the model is that it can offer an explanation for exnomination (Barthes, 1973), which literally means "unnamed." Exnomination refers to that which is naturally assumed by society as natural and which therefore does not need to be subject to debate. Although clearly linked with myth, a good way to think about exnomination is that it refers to core myths of the dominant (O'Sullivan *et. al.*, 1983) that are usually unnoticed, unnamed, and subsequently unchallenged. Just as myths find their way into people's cognitions via repeated and consistent use in language, exnominated myths would do the same except that the labels and language used would be completely different. Since exnominated myth works by not being named or made explicit, these myths would exist in people's cognitions far in the natural background, if attended to at all (remember, something has to be attended to in order to be encoded). Thus, just as stereotypes work cognitively via the labels and language used, exnomination works cognitively by the *lack* of labels or language used to describe it.

The answer to the "So What?" question thus goes something like this: Racial stereotypes in the media can influence our interpretations of media content in a way that supports dominant racial myths. By automatically priming racial stereotype-congruent interpretations of subsequent media texts, and by doing so repeatedly and consistently, stereotypes in the media can maintain unjust, harmful, and dominating understandings of race by influencing the way individuals interpret media texts. Such automatic priming can occur whether or not the individual involved necessarily believes in the stereotype, and although people can subsequently argue against the automatically primed constructs, in a sense the damage has already been done. The linguistic labels have been strengthened yet again, ready to move interpretation in the direction of dominant understandings whenever one's guard is down.

What to do? Well, such a framework suggests that for those of us who have already been socialized into automatically engaging the racial stereotypes, we have to be ever-vigilant to realize that this is going on and take the time and effort to consciously rework our interpretations of media content into an interpretation that is less stereotypical. This demands a critical and active reader of media texts. And since consistent and repeated exposure leads to automaticity, we can attempt to dilute our myth-congruent associations by consistently and repeatedly engaging in more critical media interpretations.

At the same time, such a framework suggests that we should try to foster critical and active reading in the next generation of media consumers, so that they may be less likely to develop automatic stereotype-congruent interpretations. Such fostering of critical media reading skills needs to work hand-in-hand with ways of reducing the amount of stereotype-congruent depictions in the media. This issue, of course, is a sticky wicket, as the demands of fostering a less racially stereotypical media can easily come up against First Amendment principles of free speech. Clearly some kind of compromise between these two socially desirable principles needs to be worked out. Although critical reading of media texts is a good step in the right direction that each individual can take, battling racism is a difficult challenge as it is without having to constantly be battling the automaticity of our own brains.

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Turning the Spotlight Inward: How Leading News Organizations Covered the Media in the 1992 Presidential Election

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Turning the Spotlight Inward: How Leading News Organizations Covered the Media in the 1992 Presidential Election

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This study examined how leading newspapers and television networks covered the media in the 1992 presidential campaign. The main topic of media coverage was general media stories, although considerable attention was also given to how the media performed in the campaign and candidates' use of media. Tone of coverage was different for different media themes with coverage of media performance being the most negative. How the press covered the media changed as the campaign progressed. Different candidates were covered differently; George Bush received significantly more negative coverage than his two competitors.

Turning the Spotlight Inward: How Leading News Organizations Covered the Media During the 1992 Presidential Election

As the media's influence on society has grown, so has media coverage of the impact of the press on society. This especially holds true for political campaigns. The media have increasingly analyzed and critiqued how they perform in election campaigns, which Stebenne views as "both a logical outgrowth of a new emphasis on the political process and the growing sense of the media's central place within it."[1] News organizations hardly had time to recover from the 1992 election before commentators began speculating on how the media will (or should) cover the 1996 campaign.[2]

While some observers complain that the media are generally reluctant to report on their influence in society,[3] many acknowledge that the media are increasingly examining their role in the political process during elections. Bennett found that the media covered themselves extensively in the 1988 and 1990 elections. Indeed, media coverage of the elections has become a part of some reporters' beats.[4] Similarly, Patterson noted the media have increasingly put their own spin on election coverage. He found that journalists' perspectives accounted for about 80 percent of the largely negative tone of coverage in the 1992 campaign compared to just 35 percent in 1960,[5] and that the increasingly negative tone of election coverage paralleled growing levels of public dissatisfaction with the candidates.[6]

The media's increased tendency to make themselves the focus of campaign coverage has brought both praise and condemnation from political observers. Tankard and Sumpter,[7] for instance, claim that such coverage alerts the readers to the behind-the-scenes efforts of the candidates to manipulate media coverage and encourages reporters to be aware of how factors such as manipulation, newsroom ideology and newsgathering routines can influence how they cover the campaign. Similarly, the Freedom Forum researchers contend that the media could maintain public confidence in the quality of election coverage by "let[ting] the public tune in along the way by indicating specifically how they arrive at major news decisions about emphasis and overall coverage."[8]

However, Kerbel compared media attention to the process of covering the campaign to eating fast food: one can survive on it, but at a cost to the body politic. Kerbel argues that the cost of reflexive coverage to the campaign process may be increased voter cynicism. Stories about media coverage of the campaign portray politicians as self-interested media manipulators who are concerned only about power and personal gain and demonstrate that reporters serve as knowing participants in this manipulation process. He suggests that instead of encouraging media manipulation by describing the process, the public would be better served if reporters ignored the manipulation process or tried to change it.[9] Journalists themselves are increasingly concerned about tendency of the media to make themselves a focus of the events they cover. Frank Rich of the *New York Times* argues, "A real press sin is its increasing tendency to find journalism more fascinating than the stories it is covering."[10]

Despite widespread recognition of media influence in the political process and increased media self-scrutiny in campaigns, few studies have attempted to quantify how the media cover themselves. This study will examine both amount and tone of coverage devoted to different themes of media coverage during the 1992 presidential election in two leading newspapers, the *New York Times* and the *Chicago Tribune*, and in the three main networks. This study will also investigate whether coverage of the media changed as the campaign progressed and whether tone of media stories differed for Bill Clinton, George Bush and Ross Perot.

The few studies that have looked at media coverage of the media in political campaigns have drawn different conclusions. A Markle Commission study found that only 4.4 percent of news stories in the 1988 presidential campaign focused on the media. About two-thirds of those centered on campaign advertising while the rest concerned campaign coverage. Stories about the media were overwhelmingly neutral in tone.[11] Bennett, using a far broader definition of media coverage, said that nearly every story in the 1990 elections made some reference to some aspect of the media: polling, marketing, media manipulation or advertising.[12]

Kerbel, in the most extensive examination of media coverage of the media to date, found that about 20 percent of ABC's and CNN's 1992 election coverage focused on the media. Most of the media stories (close to 40 percent in the primaries and more than two-thirds in the general election) were general references to television or other media, although considerable space was also devoted to candidate motivation (stories that examined the motives guiding a candidate's behavior to the press) and to candidate-press relations. A smaller portion of the coverage (less than 5 percent) centered on campaign behavior (i.e. the actions of the candidates or their operatives to construct a favorable public image or to manipulate media coverage) and technical matters (mentions of technical terms such as "spin doctor" and "sound bite."). Nearly 80 percent of the coverage of the media was neutral.[13] But while Kerbel looks at both type and tone of election coverage of the media, his study is restricted to television use. His categories also focus almost exclusively on candidate-press relationships and ignore such topics as press performance, candidate performance in the media as well as how the media cover campaign and policy issues.

While researchers disagree on the amount of election coverage devoted to analyzing the role of the media, they do agree that such coverage is increasing. For instance, Tankard and Sumpter measured the increased tendency of the media to focus on their role in the presidential campaign by tracking the use of the term "spin doctor" in recent elections. They found that while the use of the term increased tremendously over recent elections, it has been used in a less negative and less specific way. The term "spin doctor," then, has been increasingly used to trivialize media manipulation rather than to criticize the practice.[14]

While few academic studies have examined how the media covered themselves in presidential elections, journalists and other political observers routinely analyze and critique media performance in the presidential campaign.

After the 1988 presidential campaign, angst about media performance in the campaign ran high. Media critics, and even members of the industry themselves, blamed the media for the negative nature of the campaign, for failing to probe candidates' claims and for focusing too much on image over substance.[15] Journalists focused too heavily on sound bites, photo opportunities, polls and other horse-race aspects of the campaign and thus offered the voters few insights.[16]

Journalists vowed to reform themselves in the 1992 campaign and some observers saw improvements. Near the end of the campaign, a Freedom Forum report concluded that 1992 marked perhaps the best election coverage in this country's history.[17] Indeed, a study by the Times Mirror Center for The People & The Press found that a plurality of journalists surveyed rated coverage of the 1992 election better the 1988 campaign.[18] Others, however, faulted the media for failing to adequately investigate claims against Bill Clinton's character,[19] for relying too heavily on sound bites and the polls,[20] for the continued "pack mentality" of coverage,[21] for allowing tabloid newspapers and broadcast talk shows to set the agenda for election coverage[22] and for slanting coverage in favor of Bill Clinton.[23]

While those in the media have spent considerable time analyzing and criticizing their performance in election campaigns, few studies have examined how the press has covered media coverage of the campaign. Those studies that have examined media coverage tend not to distinguish between different types of media stories.

This study identified five types of stories about the media in the presidential campaign: media performance/impact, media coverage of policy issues, media coverage of campaign issues, candidate media strategy/candidate media performance and general media stories.[24]

Media performance/impact stories were ones that judged how well the media covered the campaign as well as those that assessed the impact of the media on voters or on how the candidates conduct their campaign. These, then, are stories that focus on the role of the media in the campaign. Media performance stories have an evaluation element, critiquing such issues as whether coverage of a candidate has been fair or whether the media have paid enough attention to issues in the campaign. For example, one story castigated the media for concentrating too much on charges of marital infidelity against Clinton and on whether George Bush's State of the Union speech would save his foundering campaign and for ignoring important policy issues.[25] Media impact stories, on the other hand, examine the power of the media or campaign advertising. Specifically, such stories examine how the media influence voters or the ways in which candidates conduct their campaign. For instance, one article written just after the New Hampshire primary noted that those candidates who produced the slickest ads and who had the largest ad budgets lost.[26]

Media coverage of policy issues were stories that discussed media attention to policy positions of candidates on major questions of how the government should or should not proceed in a social or political area such as the economy, foreign policy or education. Media coverage of campaign issues were stories that looked at how the media covered the character or image of the candidates, issues raised during the campaign (e.g. marital infidelity and draft evasion) and candidate gaffes (e.g. an off-color joke by Bob Kerrey that was picked up by a microphone). If such stories evaluated how well the media covered policy or campaign issues, however, they were listed under media performance rather than policy/campaign issues. Several stories on candidates' ad campaigns discussed policy issues that presidential hopefuls were using to advance their candidacy or to attack their opponents.[27] Stories on media coverage of campaign issues addressed a number of topics. For instance, stories examined which character issues were acceptable to cover and which ones remained out-of-bounds[28] and how the mainstream press worked in tandem with the supermarket tabloids to keep the Gennifer Flowers story alive.[29]

While media performance/impact stories concentrated on either the role or the performance of the media in the campaign, candidate strategy/performance stories were ones that focused on the candidates and their use of the media. Candidate strategy stories included those that discussed how candidates tried to attract media attention or how they used the media to get across their message to the voters. Often such stories dealt with how candidates manipulated the media. For instance, several stories examined how the candidates employed "new media" such as television talk shows, electronic town halls and infomercials both to deliver their message unfiltered to the American people and to sidestep tough questions posed by reporters from the traditional media.[30] Others focused on how Clinton manipulated the media both to polish his image[31] and to diffuse scandals like Gennifer Flowers.[32] Candidate media performance stories were ones that judged whether a candidate had an effective media presence or whether the candidate's media persona hurt or helped his campaign. For example, several stories rated how the candidates performed on the television talk shows[33] or television in general.[34]

Finally, general media stories included a wide range of topics that did not fit under the above categories such as profiles of leading newspapers and media figures who were a part of the campaign (e.g., profiles of Larry King or on influential newspapers or broadcast stations), histories of media campaign coverage, stories on new media technologies used in election coverage, stories on how the media would cover the 1992 presidential campaign and stories announcing the appearance of a candidate on a certain medium. For instance, *New York Times* reporter Elizabeth Kolbert took readers through a day of covering the Clinton campaign, letting them in on the "dirty little secret" that riding the campaign bus was not exciting or glamorous, but dull. "It's like spending several months on a field trip."[35]

The 1992 presidential campaign provides an ideal opportunity to study media coverage of themselves because the media were often the center of election stories: Tabloids set the agenda of the mainstream press on coverage of sexual allegations against Clinton; candidate Clinton played the saxophone on "Arsenio Hall"; Ross Perot announced his candidacy on "Larry King Live"; and MTV pioneered a "Choose or Lose" campaign to encourage young adults to vote. Ross Perot, in particular, elevated the importance of the media in the campaign as he avoided the standard stump speeches (and the reporters covering them) by conducting his campaign largely through the "new media" of talk shows, electronic town halls and infomercials.

While scholars noted a marked change in how candidates used the media in the 1992 campaign (i.e., sidestepping the traditional media by campaigning through television talk shows and other "new media"), less attention has been paid to whether the press changed how it covered the media as the campaign progressed.

Kerbel noted, however, that television coverage shifted from the primaries to the general election campaign. During the primaries, more than half of the reflexive coverage concentrated on general candidate-press relations or on candidate motivations. However, more than two-thirds of the mentions of the media during the general election were general references to campaign coverage. He attributed the large amount of what he calls "process coverage" in the primaries to boredom: reporters ran out of things to write about, so they turned the media spotlight inward to examine how they covered the campaign.[36]

Similarly, newspaper and the television networks may stress different themes because of structural differences in the two media. Researchers contend that television, more than newspapers, stresses the visual and the dramatic and that stories lacking these qualities are more likely to be ignored by the networks.[37] Indeed, Johnson found in his study organization and finance stories, received less attention on television than newspapers.[38]

Finally, while Ross Perot and Bill Clinton are credited for being innovators and for effectively managing their coverage during the 1992 campaign by taking their message directly to the people through talk shows, entertainment programs and other new media, Bush was pilloried for running an inept media campaign.[39] This study will determine whether this perception of how different candidates conducted their campaign filtered into stories about the media.

This study will examine how the *New York Times*, the *Chicago Tribune* and the three main networks covered the media in the 1992 presidential election. The study will investigate the following questions:

1. What was the amount of coverage devoted to the five types of media stories in the 1992 presidential election?
2. Was tone of coverage different for different media themes?
3. Did coverage change over the course of the campaign in terms of tone and amount of coverage devoted to the various campaign themes?
4. Did the newspaper and networks differ in the media themes they stressed and their tone of media coverage during the 1992 presidential election?
4. Was tone of coverage different for different candidates?

Methods

This study examined how the media covered the media in the 1992 presidential election through a content analysis of the *New York Times*, the *Chicago Tribune* and of the three major networks.[40]

All news stories, features and news analyses from January 1991 until election day which discussed the 1992 presidential election or the media's role in the election were initially included in the analysis. Items appearing on the editorial or op/ed page were not coded. Similarly, television stories labeled as commentary were not included. This study will focus, however, on those stories that specifically concerned the media in the presidential campaign. For the purpose of this study, media refer to the traditional broadcast and print media, nontraditional media like talk shows, communication technologies and campaign advertisements. A story was only labeled a media story if the press, the communication technology or the campaign advertisement was central to the story. Stories in which the media were incidental to the main topic, such as stories discussing what occurred at a televised debate, were not coded as media stories.

To determine how newspapers and television covered the media in the 1992 presidential election, this study will examine amount and tone of coverage devoted to the various media categories: media performance/impact, media coverage of policy and campaign issues, candidate media strategies/candidate media performance and general media stories.

The unit of analysis was the story theme. Coders were instructed to determine the dominant theme of each article by examining what was stressed in the lead. For television content, coders were told to look at the opening sentence of the abstract. But because stories often had more than one prominent theme, each important theme was coded. Again, only those stories with a dominant media theme were included in the analysis.

Amount of coverage was measured by totaling how many times each type of media category appeared as a dominant theme in a story.

In measuring tone of coverage, coders were told to judge whether coverage for each media theme was predominantly positive or negative or was neutral or mixed. Coders were instructed to examine whether the media were judged positively or negatively, not how the candidates were rated. Thus a story theme praising Clinton's mastery of television would only be coded as positive if it specifically lauded television rather than simply Clinton's use of it.[41]

Past studies have found that how the press covers the election changes as the campaign progresses.[42] Furthermore, Ross Perot is credited with setting the media's agenda in how they covered the campaign because of his determination to avoid the traditional media and take his message directly to the people through the call-in talk shows, infomercials and electronic town halls.[43] Therefore, to determine whether or not coverage of the media indeed changed through the campaign, this study divided the campaign into the significant periods of the Perot presidential effort: the period before he entered the race (January 1, 1991 to April 16, 1992); the time between when he first announced a possible run on "Larry King Live" to when he bowed out of the race at the start of the the Democratic National Convention (April 17-July 16); the period in which he was not a part of the campaign (July 17-September 18) and finally, after he signaled that he planned to reenter the campaign (September 19 to election day). These time periods conform roughly to the major stages of a traditional campaign: the primaries, the post-primaries, the convention period and the general election.[44] Chi-squares were run to determine whether amount of coverage devoted to media themes and whether tone of coverage changed during the course of the campaign. Similarly chi-square was employed to determine whether tone of coverage was different for different media themes.

To examine differences between how the networks and the newspapers covered the media in the 1992 election, this study will examine differences in media themes stressed and tone of media coverage between the two media using chi-square analysis.[45]

Finally to examine whether media coverage varied for different candidates, tone of coverage for Bill Clinton, George Bush and Ross Perot was compared through chi-square analysis.

A week of coverage in the *Times*, the *Tribune* and the networks during each major stage of the media campaign was double coded to check for intercoder reliability. Intercoder reliability was checked for three measures: whether or not a story theme involved the media, tone of media stories and types of media stories. Intercoder reliability averaged 82 percent for the three measures.[46]

Results

Past studies suggest that stories focusing on the media in presidential campaigns constitute a small, but growing percentage of overall campaign coverage.

Approximately 7 percent of all story themes coded centered on the media in the 1992 presidential election, with about two-thirds appearing in the *New York Times*. This figure is dwarfed by the amount devoted to the horse-race and campaign strategy coverage (32 percent), general campaign news (32 percent), policy issues (15.5 percent) and campaign issues (13 percent) (data not shown). However, the 7.1 percent figure represents a jump from the 4.4 percent recorded by the Markle Commission in its study of the 1988 campaign.[47]

Most of the media themes (43 percent) were devoted to general discussions about the media in the campaign such as features on media figures and organizations, stories on how the media would cover the campaign and listings of candidates' television appearances (Table 1). But a sizable percentage also concentrated on the media's role in the campaign: candidates' media strategies and media performance (28 percent) as well the media's impact and/or how well the media covered the race (14 percent). The number of story themes looking at how the media covered campaign issues (8 percent) or policy issues (7 percent) lagged behind other media coverage categories. Such stories generally judged the media's performance in those areas and thus were coded as media performance/impact stories.

Past studies suggest that most of the stories examining how the media cover themselves in presidential campaigns are neutral.[48] This study supports those findings. However, tone of coverage differed depending on which media theme one examined (Table 2).

Different media themes were covered differently. Three-quarters of all media stories were neutral with more than 80 percent of general media stories, candidate media strategy, and stories about media coverage of policy issues lacking a specific slant (Table 2). However, media performance proved a big exception. Nearly half of the stories rating media performance gave the media negative reviews. Media performance stories were particularly negative during the primaries when the media were castigated for their obsession with the Gennifer Flowers story. Only one *New York Times* media performance story, one in which Jerry Brown praised his coverage, could be deemed a positive media story. Even that story was tainted. The *Times* accused Brown of pandering to the media for complimenting them.[49] The media did write a smattering of positive media performance stories late in the campaign as both the public and political observers gave the media good marks for their campaign coverage.[50] Similarly, almost 40 percent of campaign issue media stories were also negative. Many of these were articles criticizing the message of candidates' attack ads.[51]

How the press covered the media changed as the campaign progressed, although tone of media coverage did not differ significantly over the course of the campaign (Table 3).

The press stressed different themes during different stages of the election. During each stage of the campaign, general media stories dominated. However, the percentage of general media stories grew considerably when Perot entered the campaign. Perot conducted his campaign through the "new media" of talk shows and electronic town halls, and several stories simply focused on his appearance at such events or announced that he (or another candidate) would appear on a venue such as "Larry King Live" or MTV. As Perot and other candidates increasingly sidestepped the traditional media and brought their message directly to the people through the new media, the media also tended to focus attention away from their performance in the campaign and toward how the candidates used the media. Candidate media strategy stories increased and media performance and media coverage of campaign issue stories dropped after Perot entered the race. However, stories about media performance increased again after Perot left the campaign as the media judged their performance in convention coverage, then dropped again after he re-entered the campaign. Several stories late in the campaign praised the tenor of the candidates' ads, noting that they were generally avoiding attacks on opponents and instead dealt more with issues.[52] This is reflected in the increase in media coverage of policy issues stories late in the campaign.

Tone of coverage did not change significantly over the course of the campaign as at least 70 percent of the media stories were neutral at each stage of the contest (Table 3). However, journalists tended to be the most critical of the media early in the campaign before Perot entered the race; amount of negative coverage dropped and positive coverage rose after that. Two events, in particular, drew fire from both political observers and reporters alike: the Gennifer Flowers story and the attack coverage against Bill Clinton during the New York campaign. Journalists were particularly scornful of the media's preoccupation with Gennifer Flowers' charges that she had a long-running affair with Bill Clinton, a story in which the mainstream press was following the lead of the supermarket tabloids. Critics charged that the media were engaging in "tabloid terrorism" and were doing exactly what they pledged not to do in 1992 coverage: focus on character flaws at the expense of issues.[53] Journalists also castigated their New York peers for the ferocity of their attacks on Clinton during the New York primaries when the press focused on new allegations that Clinton had evaded the draft, his admissions that he had once tried (but not inhaled) marijuana and on the fact that he had played golf at an all-white country club. For instance, Mike Royko wrote, in a column headlined "Clinton Should Lift a Finger for N.Y.," that "beating up on politicians has now supplanted baseball as America's favorite pastime. But in New York, they've turned it into a journalistic gang bang. And they're proud of it." Royko suggested that Clinton could revive his flagging campaign by doing what his headline suggested: rhetorically lifting his middle finger at the New York press and its citizens in general.[54]

Past studies have suggested that television and newspapers differ in how they cover the campaign. This study also found that the two media focused on different types of media stories and differed in their tone of coverage (Table 4).

The two media differed in their initial interest in covering how the media cover themselves. Newspapers were much more interested in investigating how the media were covering the campaign than were the networks; nearly 80 percent of the media stories appeared in the two newspapers.

Media coverage in both newspapers and television was dominated by general media stories. However, while most of the remaining media stories in the newspapers were devoted to analyzing the media strategies and performance of the candidates, television split coverage fairly evenly between candidate's media strategy, media performance and media coverage of campaign issues.

Researchers contend that television covers the election more negatively than newspapers. Indeed, newspapers ran significantly more positive stories than television. However, television's coverage was only slightly more negative than newspapers'; a greater share of television media stories were neutral.

Perot was recognized as the candidate best able to orchestrate his coverage during the 1992 presidential campaign, while Bush was singled out as having the least innovative and effective media strategy.[55] This is reflected in media stories. Bush had significantly fewer positive and more negative media stories than his two competitors (Table 5). Perot and

Clinton had nearly identical levels of positive coverage, but Perot had far fewer negative ones. Both Clinton and Bush had more negative media stories than Perot, in part, because of negative campaign ads. Clinton and Bush hurled negative ads at each other and tended to ignore Perot. Also, stories criticizing media performance often dredged up the negative campaign issues raised against Clinton such as Gennifer Flowers.[56] There were too few media stories for each candidate to adequately test which media theme was responsible for the negative coverage of Clinton and Bush, although results suggest that media coverage of policy issues was a major contributor to their negative coverage. Many of these policy stories were campaign ads attacking the competitor's policy positions.[57] On the other hand, it appears that much of Perot's positive coverage came from stories praising his media strategy, although Perot appeared in too few media stories to reach any definitive conclusions.

Discussion

Political observers claim that the media have increasingly analyzed and critiqued themselves during presidential elections as their role in the election process has grown.

Indeed, approximately 7 percent of stories focused on the media, a slight increase from what researchers found in the 1988 election.[58]

The 7 percent figure for media coverage was easily eclipsed by the amount of coverage devoted to other topics such as the horse race and campaign issues. But coverage of the media marked a small, but important aspect of election coverage, particularly in the *New York Times*. The *Times* regularly ran stories under a heading marked "media" or with a television-shaped logo titled "campaign watch." This study only examined stories where the media were a significant theme. Several others mentioned the media or media coverage without making it a focus of the story. By limiting itself to stories in which the media were the clear focus, this study underrepresents the number of stories where the media are mentioned.[59] Thus, as Bennett suggests, media coverage of the media has become institutionalized as part of the election beat.[60]

This is one of the first studies to examine media coverage of the media in depth. While commentators and researchers tend to focus on rating media performance or on candidates' attempts to manipulate the media, the main topic of media coverage in the 1992 election was general media stories. This suggests that journalists generally were not analyzing the media's role in the election process, but simply treating the media as part of the campaign. Thus, fears that the coverage of the media is possibly increasing voter cynicism by portraying politicians as self-interested media manipulators and journalists as willing dupes in the manipulation process may be overstated. Similarly, claims that the media are educating people about how the media manipulate the press may also be overblown as little space is devoted to campaign strategy coverage.

While commentators blamed the media for a host of sins such as relying too heavily on sound bites and polls and becoming too distracted by trivia such as sex scandals, the consensus of analysts was that media performed better in 1992 than in 1988.[61] This was not apparent, however, in the tone of media stories. Few stories were positive; stories leveling criticisms outnumbered those offering praise more than 2-1.

The media treated different media themes differently. Coverage for most themes was overwhelmingly neutral—more than 75 percent for most media themes—which mirrors the results of earlier studies.[62] However, nearly half of all media performance stories were negative, a finding that supports a study by the Center for Media and Public Affairs that found that commentators' assessments of campaign coverage in the 1992 campaign were overwhelmingly negative.[63] Perhaps in judging their own performance harshly, the media were performing their watchdog function. Some past studies suggest that the media attack the person leading the presidential campaign. They look with a critical and skeptical eye at the person who could one day become president.[64] Perhaps journalists believe that the media, because of their central role in the election process, should also be subjected to the same scrutiny as front runners. The overwhelmingly negative coverage of media performance also confirms the observations of analyst Dirk Smillie that "many of the media's harshest critics are the political writers and pundits employed by the media themselves."[65]

The overwhelmingly negative coverage of media performance in the campaign may have unintended consequences. By running stories criticizing their performance and by featuring campaign strategy stories about how the candidates sidestepped reporters by campaigning through the new media, journalists may be portraying themselves as largely irrelevant to the election process, thus undercutting their ability to cover the campaign effectively.

Political observers credit Ross Perot with bringing about fundamental changes in how presidential campaigns are conducted by limiting his time on the campaign trail where his campaign message would be filtered through the traditional media and instead campaigning through television talk shows and electronic town halls where he could bring his message on how to fix what ailed America directly to the people. This hardly went unnoticed by the media. Several stories dealt with how Perot and other candidates were increasingly relying on the new media to conduct their campaigns. Perot also influenced how the the media covered the media in the 1992 presidential race in several ways. First, the press paid increasing attention to the role of the media in the campaign once Perot entered the campaign. More media stories appeared in the three months between when Perot first publicly broached the idea of running for president and when he dropped out of the campaign than in the previous 16 months (112 stories as compared to 104). Second, how journalists covered the media changed after Perot entered. Journalists became less concerned with how the media were performing in the campaign and more on how the candidates were using the media. Stories about media strategies increased after Perot entered the race as did general media stories. Even the tone of coverage of the media tended to change after Perot entered the race; media stories tended to be more positive. Not all of the changes in how journalists covered the media could necessarily be explained by Perot's entry in the campaign; Perot had nothing to do with the Gennifer Flowers story or the media's attacks on Clinton in New York and the number of negative media stories that arose from these events. However, Perot clearly changed how candidates conducted political campaigns and consequently how the media covered the election as well as how they covered their roles in the campaign.

Previous studies suggest that while television and newspapers differ little in the amount of space they give to candidates, the nature of coverage can differ significantly; television accounts of the campaign tend to be more negative than newspapers because they rely on analysis rather on straightforward reporting of the campaign. Indeed, television had fewer positive stories than newspapers, although the difference in amount of negative coverage was slight because television ran more neutral media stories than newspapers. However, this does not necessarily mean that television strived more than newspapers to avoid slanting media articles. Tone of coverage was not always clear from the Vanderbilt archives, and such themes were coded as neutral.

Past research also suggests that the two media cover the news differently. Television stresses stories that are more visual and dramatic. Thus, it is probably not surprising that they spent more time covering the candidates on the stump and less time on how the media cover themselves than did newspapers. Almost 80 percent of the media stories appeared in newspapers, particularly the *New York Times.* Media stories are part of the process of conducting the campaign rather than being events in the campaign itself. Thus, media stories often lack strong visual elements. Therefore, while newspapers would write stories explaining how events are staged to attract favorable press coverage,[66] television was more content covering the media events themselves. The newspapers' fascination with the processes and the strategies of conducting a campaign would explain why it ran more media strategy stories than television. Television, on the other hand, ran more stories about media coverage of campaign issues. Several of these stories were about the content of attack ads by candidates, a media story with a strong visual element that would play well on television. Similarly, campaign issues such as the Gennifer Flowers affair produced striking visuals such as Flowers addressing a press conference or having her face splashed on the cover of supermarket tabloids.

The three main candidates were treated differently in stories about the media. While coverage for all three candidates in media stories was overwhelmingly neutral, Bush received the brunt of the negative coverage and benefitted from fewer positive media stories than his two competitors. Results from this study parallel those of overall coverage in the 1992 presidential campaign. The Center for Media and Public Affairs found that 93 percent of nonpartisan (mostly reporters) comments about Bush's campaign were negative.[67] Patterson argued that this does not necessarily mean journalists were slanting their stories to keep Bush from being elected. The media frame their discussion of all aspects of their coverage—the image of the candidates, the issues and candidate strategy—in terms of the horse race. That is, how candidates are portrayed depends on where they stand in the race and their perceived momentum in the polls.[68] Therefore, Bush's negative media story coverage could be explained, at least in part, by his poor standings in the polls. Reporters perceived that this media strategy must have been ineffective because he trailed Clinton so badly in the race. Indeed, tone of coverage for his media strategy/media performance was the most negative of the three candidates. However, Bush's negative coverage in media stories could also be explained by the reality that he was attacked in campaign ads by Clinton. The negative ad campaign waged by Clinton and Bush against each other also explains why so little of Perot's coverage was negative.

The campaign to unseat Bill Clinton is already away. Future studies should examine how the press covers the media in the 1996 campaign to determine if such coverage increases in 1996 and to discover whether the patterns of coverage found in this study are repeated or were simply election specific. Future studies should probably include news magazines to get a clearer picture of how different media cover the media presidential campaigns. The sample of media stories in this study was not large enough to separate stories about campaign ads, the traditional media and new media such as talk shows. Future studies should probably examine more papers as well as news magazines to determine if the media cover stories about different kinds of election media differently.

Notes

1. David Stebenne, "Media Coverage of American Presidential Elections: A Historical Perspective," in *The Finish Line: Covering the Campaign's Final Days*, ed. The Freedom Forum (New York: The Freedom Forum Media Studies Center, January 1993), 87-88.

2. Jamie Malanowski, "Generals Fighting the Last War," *Washington Journalism Review*, December 1992, 25-27; Edward C. Pease, "The Media Scoreboard, Final Round: Lessons of Campaign '92," In The Freedom Forum, *Finish Line*, 137-153.

3. Everette E. Dennis, A.N. Romm and James Ottaway, Jr., "The Case for Constructive Criticism of the Press," *Newspaper Research Journal* 11(Spring 1990): 2-10.

4. W. Lance Bennett, *The Governing Crisis: Media, Money, and Marketing in American Elections* (NY: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 191.

5. Thomas E. Patterson, *Out of Order* (NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993), 113-114.

6. Patterson, *Out of Order*, 20-23.

7. James W. Tankard, Jr. and Randy Sumpter, "Media Awareness of Media Manipulation: The Use of the Term 'Spin Doctor,'" (Paper delivered at AEJMC Annual Meeting, Kansas City, MO, August 1993).

8. "Executive Summary," in *The Homestretch: New Politics. New Media. New Voters?* ed. The Freedom Forum (NY: Freedom Forum Media Studies Center, October 1992), 9.

9. Matthew R. Kerbel, "The Media as Political News: Reflexive Reporting of the 1992 U.S. Presidential Campaign" (Paper delivered at International Communication Association, Albuquerque, NM, May 1995).

Joe Arena, in an article examining how the media covered themselves in the Whitewater scandal ("Oh God Comma We Hate Self-Consciousness: Journalism, Whitewater, Reflexivity," [Paper delivered at International Communication Association Annual Meeting, Albuquerque, May 1995]) said that while reflexive coverage shows audience the process of manufacturing the news, making the media the subject of the news creates tensions with the concept of objectivity. This tension leads to dubious claims on the part of the press such as claiming the media were just following the events of Whitewater rather than keeping the story alive.

10. Frank Rich, "Another Media Morning After," *New York Times*, 30 June, 1994, sec. A, p. 23, col. 1.

11. Bruce Buchanan, *Electing a President: The Markle Commission Research on Campaign '88* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1991), 64-65.

12. Bennett, *Governing Crisis*, 191.

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13. Matthew Robert Kerbel, *Edited for Television: CNN, ABC, and the 1992 Presidential Campaign* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994), 35-49; Kerbel, "Media as Political News."

14. Tankard and Sumpter, "Media Awareness of Media Manipulation".

15. Richard Harwood, "Political Guesswork," *Washington Post*, 11 Dec. 1988, sec. C, p. 6, col. 5.

16. Jack W. Germond and Jules Witcover, *Whose Broad Stripes and Bright Stars?: The Trivial Pursuit of the Presidency, 1988* (New York: Warner Books, 1989), 56-59; Paul Taylor, *See How They Run: Electing the President in an Age of Mediaocracy* (NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990), chapt. 10; James Warren, "Search for Truth: Media Gird for '92," *Chicago Tribune*, 3 Nov. 1991, sec. D, p. 1, col. 1.

17. Everette E. Dennis, "Memo to the Press," in The Freedom Forum, *Finish Line*, 9.

Media critic Edwin Diamond also thought that network coverage of the 1992 presidential election was the best in television history (Edwin Diamond, "Getting in Right: The Networks and the Campaign," *New York*, 2 Nov. 1992, 18). Philip Meyer praised innovations in media coverage and credited the media for focusing more on issues in 1992 than in earlier campaigns (Philip Meyer, "The Media Reformation: Giving the Agenda Back to the People," in *The Elections of 1992*, ed. Michael Nelson (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 1993), 89-108. However, the Freedom Forum's political experts were critical of media performance in the primaries ("The Media Scoreboard: Experts Assess Campaign '92 Coverage," in *Covering the Presidential Primaries*, ed. The Freedom Forum (NY: The Freedom Forum Media Center, June 1992), 73-82.

18. "The Campaign and the Press at Halftime," *Columbia Journalism Review*, July/August 1992, special supplement.

19. Jonathan Alter, "The Smear Heard 'Round the World," *Newsweek*, 19 Oct. 1992, 27.

20. Nancy Woodhull, "Election '92 Media Report Card," *Editor & Publisher*, 3 Oct. 1992, 44, 35; Jonathan Alter, "Go Ahead, Blame the Media," *Newsweek*, 2 Nov. 1992, 59; John Tierney, "Now, Journalists Renege on Election Promises," *New York Times*, 31 Jan. 1992, sec. A, p. 12, col. 5.

21.Todd Gitlin, "Media Lemmings Run Amok!," *Washington Journalism Review*, April 1992, 28-32.

22. Kathleen Hall Jamieson, Ken Auletta and Thomas E. Patterson, *1-800-President: The Report of the Twentieth Century Fund Task Force on Television and the Campaign of 1992* (NY: The Twentieth Century Fund Press, 1993); Elizabeth Kolbert, "As Political Campaigns Turn Negative, The Press is Given a Negative Rating," *New York Times*, 1 May 1992, sec. A, p. 18, col. 1.

23. "The Cheerleaders on the Bus," *Wilson Quarterly*, Spring 1993, 137-139.

24. Initially, media performance, media impact, media coverage of campaign issues, media coverage of policy issues, candidates' media strategy, candidate media

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performance and general media campaign stories were coded as separate categories. But because of small numbers in many of the groups, some categories were combined. Categories were also combined because discussion of the issues often were intertwined. For instance, stories of media impact often also commented on how well the media performed in the campaign.

25. Tierney, "Journalists Renege".

26. John Tierney, "Setback for the Media Manipulators," *New York Times*, 20 Feb. 1992, sec. A, p. 22, col. 4.

27. For instance, see "Democratic Candidates Resume Ad Brawl," *New York Times*, 14 March 1992, sec. A, p. 10, col. 2.

28. Robin Toner, "What Can Candidates Expect to Keep Private?," *New York Times*, 12 Jan. 1992, sec. D, p. 2, col. 1.

29. Alex S. Jones, "Meet the Press: Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," *New York Times*, 9 Feb. 1992, sec. D, p.4, col. 1.

30. Maureen Dowd, " Populist Media Forums and the Campaign of '92," *New York Times*, 3 Nov. 1992, sec. A, p. 14, col. 5; Elizabeth Kolbert, "Political Candidates and Call-In Shows: When the People Want to be Heard," *New York Times*, 10 June 1992, sec. A, p. 20, col. 1; Elizabeth Kolbert, "Whistle-Stops `a la 1992: Arsenio, Larry and Phil," *New York Times*, 5 June 1992, sec. A. p. 18, col. 5; Richard L. Berke, "Satellite Technology Allows Campaigns to Deliver their Messages Unfiltered," *New York Times*, 23 Oct. 1992, sec. A, p. 21, col. 1.

31. Elizabeth Kolbert, "Clinton Moves to Retouch His Image," *New York Times*, 22 April 1992, sec. A, p. 20, col. 1.
Sometimes Clinton's efforts to use the media to polish his image failed, however. One reporter noted that Clinton's image was too polished: "But it is just that sort of sheen that invites a pie in the eye, the way scrubbed surfaces cry out for graffiti." (Walter Goodman, "The Telegenic Hopeful Takes it To the Viewers," *New York Times*, 7 April 1992, sec. A, p. 24, col. 1).

32. Gwen Ifell, "When Trouble's Ahead, Clinton's Staff is Ready," *New York Times*, 29 March 1992, sec. A, p.16, col. 1.

33. Walter Goodman, "On Talk-Show Circuit, It's Clinton vs. Perot," *New York Times*, 16 June 1992, sec. C, p. 18, col. 5.

34. Elizabeth Kolbert, "More News Also Good News for Bush: He Surges on TV," *New York Times*, 22 Sept. 1992, sec. A, p. 1, col. 1.

35. Elizabeth Kolbert, "On the Campaign Trail: From Apathy to Tedium," *New York Times*, 17 March 1992, sec. A, p. 21, col. 3.

36. Kerbel, "Media as Political News".

37. John W. Windhauser and Dru Riley Evarts, "Watching the Campaigns on Network Television," in The *Media in the 1984 and 1988 Presidential Campaigns*, Guido

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H. Stempel III and John W. Windhauser, ed., (New York: Greenwood Press 1991), 67-102; Michael J. Robinson and Margaret A. Sheehan, "Traditional Ink vs. Video Versions of Campaign '80," in *Television News Coverage of the 1980 Presidential Campaign*, William C. Adams ed. (Norwood, N.J.: ABLEX Publishing, 1983), 17-27.; Michael J. Robinson and Margaret A. Sheehan, *Over the Wire and On TV: CBS and UPI in Campaign '80* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1983), 209-216.

Television coverage may also be more negative than newspapers because broadcasters rely on analysis to tell the election story while newspapers are more likely to use straightforward reporting.

38. Thomas J. Johnson, "Filling Out the Racing Form: How the Media Covered the Horse Race in the 1988 Primaries," *Journalism Quarterly* 70 (Summer 1993): 300-310.

39. John H. Eastby, "Familiarizing Ourselves in the Television Age," in *America Through the Looking Glass: A Constitutionalist Critique of the 1992 Election*, ed. Roger M. Barrus and John H. Eastby (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1994), 37; Jack Germond and Jules Witcover, *Mad as Hell: Revolt at the Ballot Box, 1992* (New York: Warner Books, 1993), 6-19.

40.The *Times* and *Tribune* were chosen because they are both leading newspapers that actively covered the presidential campaign. More specifically, the *Times* was chosen because it is the nation's newspaper of record and one of the most influential newspapers in political circles. The *Tribune* was selected because it is one of the most important regional newspapers, and for ideological balance. Television content was analyzed through the *Television News Index and Abstracts* put out by the Vanderbilt archives.

41. Media performance/impact stories were coded positive if the story praised how the media covered the campaign or noted that the media or campaign ads had a significant impact on the political process. Similarly, stories which criticized media coverage or denied the media or ads had a significant influence on the political process were coded as negative. Candidate media strategy/candidate media performance stories were only coded positive or negative if the story commented favorably or negatively about the media. For instance, stories criticizing Paul Tsongas' television persona might reflect badly on Tsongas, but they would only be coded as negative if the story criticized the media. However, a story praising a Jerry Brown ad campaign would be coded as positive because the comments refer directly to the media. A similar coding scheme was used for coverage of policy issues, coverage of campaign issues and general campaign coverage stories.

42. For instance, see Thomas J. Johnson, "The Seven Dwarfs and Other Tales: How the Networks and Select Newspapers Covered the 1988 Democratic Primaries," *Journalism Quarterly* 70 (Summer 1993): 311-320; Johnson, "Filling Out the Racing Form"; S. Robert Lichter, Daniel Amundson and Richard Noyes, *The Video Campaign: Network Coverage of the 1988 Primaries* (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Foreign Policy Research, 1988), chapt. 4.

43. Eastby, "Familiarizing Ourselves," 33-37.

44. While the primary season had not officially ended by the middle of April, Clinton had clinched the nomination and newspapers were talking about the general election rather than the primaries.

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45. There were too few network stories to examine individual differences in network and newspaper coverage over the different stages of the presidential campaign. Therefore, the two papers were combined into a newspaper category and the three networks joined in a television category.

46. There was 95 percent agreement whether the story had a media theme, 78 percent agreement on types of media stories and 73 percent agreement on tone of media stories.

47. The Markle Commission divided media stories into news reports on the use of paid advertising and stories about the nature and quality of the media's coverage of the campaign. The authors do not clearly state what constitutes a story about the nature and quality of media coverage of the campaign. It is unclear, then, whether differences between 1988 and 1992 represent a real increase in coverage about the media or are an artifact of different systems of measurement.

48. Buchanan, *Electing a President,* 64-65.

49. Michael Specter, "Thou Shalt Not Pander, But I am a Different Case," *New York Times*, 4 April 1992, sec. A, p. 10, col. 1.

50. Walter Goodman, "The Election Winner: TV Audiences," *New York Times,* 3 Nov. 1992, sec. C, p. 17, col. 1; *Chicago Tribune*, "Poll: Media Coverage."

51. Richard L. Berke, "Ads, Late and Nasty, Rule the Waves," *New York Times*, 2 Nov. 1992, sec. A, p. 16, col. 4; Richard L. Berke, "What is Scarier Than Halloween? Tune in to Candidates' Ads and See," *New York Times,* 31 Oct. 1992, sec. A, p. 7, col. 4.

52. Richard L. Berke, "Volleys of Data Replace Blatant Attacks of 1988," *New York Times*, 29 Oct. 1992, sec. A, p. 24, col. 1.

53. Maureen Dowd, "After Ordeal, is Clinton Tempered Now, or Burned?," *New York Times*, 2 Feb. 1992, sec. A, p. 24, col. 1; Tierney, "Journalists Renege."

54. Mike Royko, "Clinton Should Lift a Finger for N.Y.," *Chicago Tribune*, 2 April 1992, sec. A. p. 3, col. 1.

Tribune political reporter Jon Margolis was more tactful, but no less scornful of the New York media and its citizens, saying that while they had always expressed their views loudly, they at least used to voice them with grace and taste. "Now... they just shriek." (Jon Margolis, "Civilized Discourse? Not in N.Y.," *Chicago Tribune*, 2 April 1992, sec. A, p. 1, 20, col. 3. Even the *New York Times* had little good to say about the steady drum beat of negative stories about the candidates (John Tierney, "New York Campaigns Generate a lot of Heat, but Little Light," *New York Times,* 2 April 1992, sec. A. p.18, col. 1).

55. Eastby, "Familiarizing Ourselves," 33-37.

56. Toner, "What Can Candidates"; Tierney, "Now, Journalists Renege."

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57. Almost 69 percent of Bush's media coverage of policy issues was negative, while 39 percent of Clinton's campaign issue and 33 percent of his policy issue coverage was negative.

58. Buchanan, *Electing a President,* 64-65

59. Indeed, Kerbel found that almost 20 percent of television news stories mentioned coverage of the media in the 1992 campaign (Kerbel, "Media as Political News"; Kerbel, *Edited for Television,* 22-24).

60. Bennett, *Governing Crisis*, 191

61. Edward C. Pease, "Assessing Coverage: A Survey of Campaign Correspondents," in The Freedom Forum, *The Finish Line*, 127-135; Jamieson, Auletta and Patterson, *1-800-President*; Alter, "Smear Heard"; Diamond, "Getting it Right; Meyer, "Media Reformation."

62. Buchanan, *Electing a President,* 64-65; Kerbel, *Edited For Television,* 48.

63. Kolbert, "As Political Campaigns Turn Negative."

64. Larry J. Sabato, *Feeding Frenzy: How Attack Journalism Has Transformed American Politics* (NY: The Free Press, 1991), 80; Robinson and Sheehan, *Over the Wire and on TV:*, 69-82.

Not all studies, however, have found that the press attacks the front runner (Thomas J. Johnson with Chris Glowaki and Timothy Boudreau, "Affection or Vivisection? How Leading News Organizations Covered the Front Runner in the 1992 Democratic Primaries" (Paper delivered at International Communication Association Annual Meeting, Albuquerque, NM, 1995; Johnson, "The Seven Dwarfs and Other Tales.")

65. Dirk Smillie, "The Public Opinion Beat," in The Freedom Forum, *Covering the Primaries*, 47.

66. Sara Rimer, "Reflections on People, Props and (Oh, Yes) Issues," *New York Times,* April 3, 1992, sec. A, p. 13.

67. Kolbert, "As Political Campaigns Turn Negative."

68. Patterson, *Out of Order,* 96-103.

Table 1: Themes of Media Stories in the 1992 Presidential Election

Themes	**Percentage**
General Media Stories	43%
Candidate Media Strategy/ Performance	28
Media Performance/ Impact	14
Media Coverage of Campaign Issues	8
Media Coverage of Policy Issues	7

	100%
N=	390

Table 2: Differences in Tone of Coverage for Media Themes in the 1992 Presidential Campaig

	Media Performance	Media/ Policy Issues	Media Campaign Issues	Candidate Strategy	General Stories
Positive	11%	4%	0%	7%	9%
Negative	47	13	39	11	10
Neutral/ Mixed	42	83	61	82	81
	---	---	---	---	---
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
N=	53	23	31	100	150

$X^2 = 54.08$, 8 d.f., $p<.001$

Table 3: Differences in coverage of media stories during different stages of the 1992 presidential campaign

Differences in amount of coverage for different media themes during different stages of the 1992 presidential campaign

Themes	**Before Perot**	**Perot in Campaign**	**Perot out of Campaign**	**Perot Back**
General Media Stories	32%	48%	44%	46%
Candidate Media Strategy/ Performance	22	32	31	27
Media Performance/Impact	20	11	20	7
Media coverage of Campaign Issues	18	7	2	4
Media coverage of Policy Issues	8	2	2	16
	---	---	---	---
	100%	100%	100%	100%
N=	104	112	45	106

X^2= 48.48, 12 d.f., p <.001

Tone of media stories during different Stages of the 1992 presidential campaign

Tone	**Before Perot**	**Perot in Campaign**	**Perot out of Campaign**	**Perot Back**
Positive	4%	9%	12%	7%
Negative	26	12	19	17
Neutral/Mixed	70	79	70	76
	---	---	---	---
	100%	100%	100%	100%
N=	104	112	45	106

X^2=9.19, 6 d.f., p=N.S.

Table 4: Differences between newspapers and the television networks in how they covered the media during the 1992 presidential election.

Differences between newspapers and the television networks in the amount of space devoted to each horse-race theme

Themes		Newspapers	Television
General Media Stories		43.5%	40%
Candidate Media Strategy/ Performance		30	21
Media Performance/Impact		13.5	16
Media coverage of Campaign Issues		6	16
Media coverage of Policy Issues		7	7
		--- 100%	--- 100%
	N=	304	87

X^2=11.12, 4 d.f., p <.05

Differences between newspaper and television in tone of coverage of media stories

Tone		Newspapers	Television
Positive		10%	1%
Negative		18	21
Neutral/Mixed		72	78
		--- 100%	--- 100%
	N=	288	80

X^2=6.59, 2 d.f, p <.05

Table 5: Differences in how the media covered media stories for individual candidates

Tone	**Clinton**	**Bush**	**Perot**
Positive	15%	6%	17%
Negative	23	32	11
Neutral/ Mixed	63	62	73
	---	---	---
	100%	100%	100%
N=	217	175	120

X^2=24.44, 4 d.f., p <.001

Was the 1994 Election a Right-wing Victory?
An Analysis of Press Coverage of 14 Campaigns

by

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Was the 1994 Election a Right-wing Victory? An Analysis of Press Coverage of 14 Campaigns

ABSTRACT

Political scientists theorize that candidates compete for the center of the ideological spectrum to win. Most voters rely on the media for information on candidates. This paper explores the media portrayal of the "center-seeking" mechanism of the candidates. Newspaper coverage of 14 campaigns was analyzed. After controlling the possible confounding varible of incubmency, candidates defined as centrist by the newspaper were still more likely to win. Also, candidates showed a mixture of liberarl and conservative stands on various issues. The findings suggest that the 1994 election was not a right-wing victory as claimed by the press.

Was the 1994 Election a Right-wing Victory? An Analysis of Press Coverage of 14 Campaigns

INTRODUCTION

In the U.S. political system, a winning candidate does not need to be supported by all voters, or even by a simple majority of 50%. He or she can declare victory by receiving the most votes among all candidates, no matter how slim the winning margin is. In reality, few, if any, candidates are sustained by all voters. In order to win, they only need to cater to the majority voices in the electorate. A pragmatic strategy for that, as suggested by Downs' model (1957), is to stay in the middle-of-the-road on policy issues or to be a so-called "centrist." This is because the model theorizes that the distribution of voters' ideology is a normal distribution, meaning that most voters are moderate rather than liberal or conservative (see Figure I). Thus, a centrist candidate would appeal to the majority and receive more votes.

With the increasing importance of the mass media as sources of political information, the effort to be perceived as a centrist has become more complicated for politicians. If most voters essentially obtain all their information about the candidates through the mass media, whether the candidates are perceived as centrists or not mainly depends on how the media shape and frame the candidates' positions. Candidates may have position papers available, but the information is not likely to reach the voters directly.

Thus, the key question is really whether those who are portrayed as centrists by the media are more likely to win. This is the basis of this study. This thesis examined the media's portrayal of the center-seeking mechanism by analyzing newspaper coverage of the candidates in a few very recent high-profile races: 14 gubernatorial and U.S. senatorial campaigns in 1994.

The Republican victory in the 1994 mid-term election casts doubt on the center-seeking theory because the press called it a right-wing or conservative victory (e.g., Goodgame, 1994; Will, 1994). The present study was able to examine whether or not the recent Republican success was due to a right-leaning tendency, or in fact still a centrist one. In other words, the long-lasting center-seeking theory was examined in a challenging situation with latest possible data.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Center-seeking Mechanism in Bi-partisan Politics

There is a gap between the ideal of democracy and practice. Democracy necessitates compromise to reach an agreement. The bi-partisan nature of U.S. democracy, however, implies that there are at least two political groups that differ in fundamental ways such as ideologies and public policies. Converse (1988/89) suggested that, in resolving this dilemma, candidates of the two parties may simply resort to seeking the middle ground. In other words, candidates are likely to subject themselves to the center-seeking mechanism.

One way to please two groups with differences is to seek the middle-ground. In elections candidates are likely to appeal to voters with different ideologies and policy preferences by standing in the middle.

Hotelling (1929) used the analogy of two competing merchants corresponding to the two major U.S. political parties to capture the essence of the center-seeking hypothesis. These two merchants would prefer to open their stores in a place where the most potential buyers were located. Only by locating the store as close as possible to the center of the "Main Street" could one merchant be sure that the other would not lure away more than half of the customers (Hotelling, 1929; Downs, 1957; Page, 1978). Similarly, it is critical for political parties to stay in the center of the liberal-conservative continuum in order to win the swing voters.

Downs (1957) elaborated on this political analogy and pioneered the center-seeking mechanism hypothesis. One of his economic models of democracy conceptualized that the distribution of public (voters') opinion on issues and policies resembles a uni-modal or bell-shaped distribution.[1] (See Figure I.) This suggests that the majority of voters center around the middle of issue or policy stands. Therefore, both parties would compete for the center to maximize votes.

Political Ideology as a Reference for Voting Choice

Political ideology here refers to a set of "fundamental beliefs or principles" concerning the goals of political or governmental action as well as the "proper procedure" for making governmental decisions (Flanigan & Zingale, 1991: 102).

Political parties use ideology to "remind voters about their views of the good society and how to achieve it," which helps voters to "evaluate the implications of the party's approach" (Popkin, 1994: 52). Therefore, political ideology appears to play an important role in election campaigns.

According to a prospective-policy-choice approach of voting theory, voters base their choice on their perceptions of what candidate policy preferences will be if elected (Joslyn, 1984). A similar "proximity voting" hypothesis suggests that people vote for the candidate or party "whose position is nearest to theirs" (Popkin, 1994: 61). As a result, before making choices, voters are interested in what an elected candidate would do after taking office (Joslyn, 1986). The ideological position of the candidate is here considered as his or her "average" ideological position on different issues that the majority of voters find important.

Analyzing candidates' positions on issues, Page (1978) noted that they tend to be consistent over time. Thus, even if a candidate's stand on a certain issue is reported infrequently by the media, voters may still be able to correctly perceive the ideology of the candidate. In this way, media's portrayal of a candidate's political ideology offers a good frame of reference or an information "short-cut" to help voters make decisions.

By no means can candidates convey a detailed list of their future stands on a variety of issues to the voters. Also, voters may not have the ability, time, or interest to comprehend such a list. Nevertheless, voters may use ideological labels to forecast which policy positions a candidate will adopt if elected (Converse, 1964; Hinich & Pollard, 1981; Popkin, 1994). Stimson's study (1984) did provide evidence that voters with a higher ability of ideological conceptualization had a higher issue constraint. In other words, voters' stands on most issues were highly correlated with the self-rating of liberal-conservative positions. Candidates are certainly likely to have high issue constraint. Therefore, their positions on a few issues should be good indicators of their stands on other issues in the political spectrum. As a result, it is easy for voters to predict candidates' future policies if elected.

Studies in Support of the Center-seeking Hypothesis

Downs' work (1957) appeared to have a big impact. Many scholars developed mathematical formulas to explain and expand Downs' uni-dimensional models (e.g., Shepsle, 1972; Davis & Hinich, 1966; Davis, Hinich &

Ordeshook, 1970; Hinich & Pollard, 1981; Enelow & Hinich, 1981, 1982, 1984; Hinich & Munger, 1994). These studies included the development of multidimensional or spatial models. Various assumptions and variables (such as additional issues and voters' alienation) were added. However, as Page put it, these studies depended too much on assumptions and thus their predictive power suffered. These theories applied only when very specific assumptions were met (1978: 18).

Furthermore, like Hotelling's (1929) and Downs' (1957) original work, these Downsian studies did not focus on the empirical relationship between center-seeking and winning. Therefore, even though Enelow and Hinich stated that the "candidate who is the closest to the center of the predictive space stands the best chance of winning" (1984: 461), their conclusion was not convincing (because it was based on theoretical mathematical calculations instead of empirical data.)

Prominent as this center-seeking phenomenon may be, few studies have provided sufficient information on the media portrayal of the center-seeking hypothesis in elections. Since the media have become a major source of information on candidates for most people (Khan 1993; West, 1993), this appears to be a critical omission.

Studies measuring the perception of candidates' ideological positions provided some insight into the media's role. For instance, Barnett, Serota and Taylor (1976) measured the voters' estimation of their spatial distance from the candidates in a congressional election in Michigan. They observed the spatial distance between the voters and candidates and then advised the Democratic candidate to move his positions toward those of the voters. For example, when most voters' positions were close to the Democratic party, they would advise the candidate to emphasize his party affiliation. This study implies that those who manage to decrease the spatial distance from the voters are more likely to win.

However, there are a few problems with this study. First, there was only one setting: north-suburban Detroit. Second, the sample was mostly limited to the Democrats. Third, the spatial distance was calculated in terms of four issues only (crime prevention, integrity and honesty in government, inflation, and busing). Thus, few generalizations could be made. The present study took a further step to include a more geographically representative sample and examine more issues to make generalization possible.

Page (1978) was among the few scholars who tested the center-seeking hypothesis with empirical data (which will be discussed later). Interestingly, all the studies mentioned above did not pay enough attention to the mediation of mass media in influencing the ideologies perceived by the voters, which was the focus of the present study.

Challenges to the Center-seeking Hypothesis

Much of the literature reviewed above suggests a significant role of the political ideology and center-seeking mechanism. However, the "center-seeking" mechanism is not accepted without dispute.

First, some researchers (e.g., Campbell et al., 1960; Pierce, 1969; Nie, Verba & Petrocik, 1976) have questioned the power of political ideology in terms of whether the public has the ability to perceive and articulate it. Page and Jones (1979) also argued that voters may misinterpret candidates' stands. For instance, if a voter likes or dislikes a candidate, the voter might think that the distance between their issue stands are closer or farther than actual. Voters' perceptions of the performance of the incumbent could contribute to one of the short-term forces, "party image," which may also play a role in vote choice (Flanigan & Zingale, 1991; Popkin, 1994).

Additionally, the data presented by Flanigan and Zingale (1991: 103) suggested an ambivalent view of the power of the party's ideological spectrum. In 1980, only 21% of the voters had a concrete conceptualization of the liberal-conservative ideology spectrum. Those who could conceptualize "group benefits," such as the rich versus the working class, or the consumer versus big businesses, accounted for only 31%. If almost half of the voters (48%) could not conceptualize at least some elements of political ideology, its power was questionable.

Furthermore, voters and candidates may react to political ideology with little constraint or consistency. Studies showed that a voter who is "liberal" on one issue may not be the same on another. They concluded that Americans were "neither consistently liberal nor conservative on a wide range of issues" (Converse, 1964; Nie & Anderson, 1974; Flanigan & Zingale, 1991).

A number of other counter-factors against ideological influence were provided. Some suggested other mediating factors (e.g., the images of the parties and candidates) are more important (Shyles, 1984). Other studies down-played the factor of ideology and argued that party affiliation was usually the most important factor in voting decisions (Flanigan & Zingale, 1991; Joslyn, 1984; Pomper, 1975; Pomper & Lederman, 1980; Popkin, 1994).

Additionally, it was argued that incumbency played a major role of election victory for reasons including higher name recognition, more media attention, and fund-raising and political experience (Hershey, 1993; Flanigan & Zingale, 1991).

"Ideological disposition" is only one of the factors of vote choice. Being one of many factors, ideology seems to be of less importance. This point of view would suggest that competing for the center of the ideological spectrum may not be a winning strategy.

The most recent challenge to the centrist strategy was the Republican victory in the 1994 mid-term election, which was interpreted as a right-wing victory by the press (e.g., Fineman, 1994; Goodgame, 1994). If right-wingers rather than centrists won, the center-seeking hypothesis was certainly in doubt.

Nevertheless, the assumption that the center is on the right in 1994, as Fineman (1994) and Goodgame (1994) suggested, was countered by other statements. For example, some reporters offered an explanation of the Republican victory: the Democrats had moved too far to the left and thus were rejected by the voters. Republicans won because they were closer to the center of the ideological spectrum by comparison. They also argued that the Republican party's conservative platform did not affect voters' perceptions of individual candidates. To survive the next election, they said that the Democrats should move back toward the center (Berke, 1994; Devroy, 1994).

The pro-centrist argument was further supported by the analysis of a few winning candidates' ideological positions. For example, several re-elected Republican governors of large states had adopted a "softer approach on the conservative agenda." Their policies had taken a mixture of liberal and conservative positions (Lacayo, 1994). For instance, they had taken liberal stands to "tax the rich," support gay rights and abortion, but still upheld conservative policies such as down-sizing the government. That mixture may have made them appear to be centrists.

Among the factors challenging the center-seeking hypothesis, incumbency deserves extra attention. As pointed out by Flanigan & Zingale (1991) and Hershey (1993), congressional and gubernatorial incumbents have had a relatively high re-election rate in recent years. The incumbency factor in 1994 was also analyzed in this study, using information about election outcomes published in the New York Times (Nov. 10, 1994). Among the 435 House campaigns, 348 incumbents sought re-election and 34 (9.77) lost, with a high re-election rate of 90.23%. Among gubernatorial races, 4(19%) out of 21 incumbents lost, and the re-election rate was 80.95%. The re-election rate of senatorial campaigns was higher (92.31%). Only 2 (7.69%) out of 26 incumbents lost. Incumbency, therefore, might be a confounding variable in the analysis of the center-seeking mechanism. This will be discussed in more detail later.

The Importance of Mass Mediated Influence

The importance of mass media in elections was the core of this study. The mass media in recent decades have evolved into a major source of information for the voters in election campaigns (Khan, 1993; West, 1993). Grabber described the role of the media in recent campaigns as "powerful and growing all the time" (1989: 227). The media appear to be important in the process of shaping voters' impression of candidates' ideological positions.

Of the various media forms, news appears to play the most significant role. News, as suggested by media sociologists (e.g., Tuchman), is a "window on the world," and reality for many is constructed by the media (1978). How we function is based on the "pictures in our head" about the outside world, although the pictures may deviate from reality. There is no doubt that the main information source about the world, nowadays, is the media (Lippmann, 1922; DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1989: 258-262). As Nimmo and Combs suggested, political realities are also mediated illusions (1983). In this sense, news has also become the most important source of information for voters to perceive the ideological positions of the candidates.

Most people do not have direct access to candidates, especially those in higher races. In other words, what voters learn "is not the real campaign but the media's version of it" (Patterson, 1980: 9). Thus, it can be suggested that no matter how far away the candidates' "real" messages are from what is shown in the media, only the mediated messages count. This explains why candidates strive for media's positive coverage (Patterson & Davis, 1985). An extreme example is that if the media do not cover a candidate, the candidate virtually does not exist and has no chance of winning (Meyrowitz, 1992). In terms of the power of the media in elections, Patterson (1980) and Wattenberg (1994) have argued that it has been increasing while the function of other message outlets such as party organizations has been on the decline.

The examination of the present study focused on issues. The print media, especially newspaper, appear to be an ideal source of such information. Although there is an argument that television news is a primary source of political information (Chang, 1993), when compared with other media such as the broadcast media, Patterson (1980) found that the print media provide more detail and depth in discussing issues. Nimmo and Combs also called TV news an "acquaintance medium" instead of a "source of knowledge" (1983: 45-46). These suggested that television news might not reveal sufficient information on candidates' ideology, which was the focus of the present study. In addition, transcripts or video tapes of local news broadcast were difficult to obtain, especially for a study like this that covered campaigns from various states.

Print media coverage is a good source of information on candidates' policy stands as revealed in debates and speeches, which are less likely to appear in TV news or political advertising because of time constraint. It is unlikely for 30-second commercials and 10-second sound-bites to cover any substantial portion of ideological statements made in debates and speeches. Only newspapers are able to print a full or extensive transcript of such events.

There is no doubt that paid media such as TV commercials are under direct control of the candidates, who can convey information of their choice to the public. In fact, a significant number of voters feel that political advertising helps them make voting decisions in general (Faber & Storey, 1985). By contrast, news coverage, which is controlled by journalists, may not focus on what the candidates intend to express (Alger, 1989; Patterson, 1980, 1994; Patterson & Davis, 1985). However, political advertising focuses more on images rather than issues (Shyles, 1984; Latimer, 1989), which are the focus of our study. Additionally, newspapers have begun to provide greater coverage of political commercial content (West, 1993: 57-60). Thus, newspaper coverage was chosen as the medium of study because newspaper appeared to be the best arena to view the framed stands of the candidates.

Measurement of the Center

To define the "center," the candidates' and voters' positions on issues should first be measured. The Detroit election study by Barnett, Serota and Taylor (1976), as mentioned earlier, raised the question of how to measure the ideological positions of the candidates and their parties. One common method of measuring ideological issue stands, as in the National Election Studies (NES)[2] (Stimson, 1984; Flanigan, 1988; Flanigan & Zingale 1991; Abramson, Aldrich & Rohde, 1986, 1990), was a seven-point left-right continuum scale. Survey respondents were asked to estimate their own positions and impression of candidates' positions based on the scale. The extreme left (point 1) and extreme right (point 7) were defined by examples, with the points from 2 to 6 undefined. This provided an easy and flexible criterion for the respondents to position their stands.

Page (1978) also made a contribution to the measurement of the center. He first analyzed candidates' speeches and other forms of statements to summarize their positions on various issues, and then compared the positions against two measures of public opinion.

One was based on the results of national opinion polls, of which the results were a yes-no dichotomy. Page then calculated the number of times a candidate was in agreement or in disagreement with the "plurality of the public." This measured which candidate more often agreed with the public. The frequency of a candidate's agreement with the public was considered a measure of closeness to the center. For example, if candidate A agreed with the public 90% of the time (on yes-no survey questions), while candidate B agreed 60%, then A was closer to the center of public opinion.

This was one way to conceptualize the center: *the center as the desires of the majority*. With individual issues, the candidate who agreed with the majority was close to the center. When the issues were summed, the candidate who agreed with the majority the most was closer to the aggregated center.

Unfortunately, this measure could be problematic. Let us use abortion as an example. Although there are some people who are against any abortion, and some others are against any restriction on it, many may remain in the middle (favoring some restrictions but generally supporting abortion in certain conditions). For an issue such this, the yes-no dichotomy may not work.

The second method utilized by Page was a "closeness-to-the-medium" technique, requiring surveys with multiple-alternative questions. On each issue he estimated the distribution of public opinion (and thus estimated the center), then judged in which quartile a candidate's position fell. For instance, if candidate A's position fell in the second or third quartile, and B fell in the first or fourth, then A was closer to the center.

Page (1978:305) admitted that this method was also problematic.

> Even so, this method is subject to measurement error. In practice, for items with three or four response alternatives it is not easy to estimate the location of the quartiles, and there is additional uncertainty in locating candidates' positions relative to the quartiles.

Nevertheless, this second method was widely used in other studies, which was to develop a scale for each issue, and use the center of the scale as the center. For example, on a 7-point scale, as Page put it, point 4 was the center "by definition." It was difficult for Page to determine the positions of the public and candidates on each issue, but the conceptualization of scaling has been widely used in many surveys, including the NES and Michigan study mentioned earlier. Unlike a single researcher (as Page), survey respondents would have fewer problems with self-reporting of their own positions and their perception of candidates' stands on the scales. Although candidates' actual stands may not be accurately reflected, at least the center of public opinion can be calculated. Also, candidates' actual positions are not as important as where voters think they stand, since voters are likely to cast their votes based on perceptions rather than reality.

To determine the center of issues as a whole, Page (1978) noted that it would be ideal not only to count or total issues, but also to weigh each issue by its salience to the voters, as well as considering the interactions between issues. He, however, admitted that such an issue-aggregation task would be difficult due to the lack of knowledge for weighing and measuring the distance among issues.[3]

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES

To recapitulate, this study was to provide empirical evidence to examine the media portrayal of the "center-seeking" phenomenon and to test whether or not a candidate portrayed as a centrist by the media was more likely to win. Data based on the 1994 election were used in order to test whether it was a right-wing victory as the press has claimed.

Following the center-seeking hypothesis of Downs', we came up with the following hypothesis:

> H_1: Candidates who are portrayed as more centrist on issues by newspapers are more likely to win their elections.

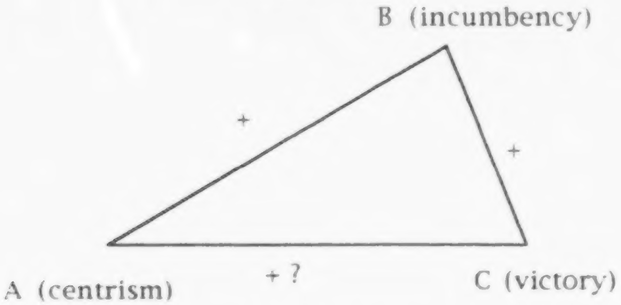
Based on the literature reviewed and the analysis of the 1994 election mentioned earlier, incumbents are more likely to win. A possibility is that they are more likely to be defined as centrists. which is tested by the second hypothesis:

> H_2: Incumbents are more likely than challengers to be defined by newspapers as centrists on issues.

The combination of H_1 and H_2 would actually make the power of center-seeking theory less convincing because incumbency could be a confounding variable. The purpose of this paper is to examine whether centrists are more likely to win elections. However, if election victory is directly linked to incumbency instead of centrist ideology (although incumbents happen to be centrists more often), center-seeking becomes a "fake" factor.[4]

The following triangle illustrates the relationship between three variables. Assume that A (centrism) is positively linked to C (victory); B (incumbency) is positively linked to A (centrism). There are two possible reasons that A is positively linked to C: 1) A and C are really linked; and 2) A and c are not directly linked but are connected through B.

Figure VIII



The goal of this study is to test the link between A (centrism) and C (election victory), which is included in H_1. The H_2 tests the link between A (centrism) and B (incumbency). Literature already suggests that B (incumbency) is strongly linked to C (victory). To strengthen the argument of H1 (centrist positions contribute to victory), it is necessary to investigate situations where there is no connection between B (incumbency) and C (victory). That is, to test whether H_1 is still supported in open-seat races. Thus, a third hypothesis was developed:

> H_3: In open-seat races, candidates who are defined as more centrist on issues by newspapers are more likely to be winners.

Another question raised was what issues appeared to be an important contributing factor to the victory in an election. A method to answer this was to determine on what issues winners and losers differed significantly. Due to the number of issues involved and their complexity, no hypothesis was generated based on this question. Nevertheless, this question was carefully examined in the analysis of findings. Methodologically, a core question was how the center should be defined. This will be discussed in the next section.

METHOD

Scale Construction and Definition of the Center

This present study of local campaigns basically followed the logic of the seven-point National Election Studies (NES) scale (e.g., Flanigan, 1988, 1992). The scaling method suggested by Page (1978) was used as reference, treating the mid-point of a scale as the center of issue stands. (See Appendix I.) This study used a five-point rather than seven-point scale for ease of coding.

As for using point 3 as the center, it was not merely that point 3 was the center of a 5-point scale "by definition;" there were several other reasons.

First, Downs' model, which was the theoretical basis of this present study, assumed the center of the scale as the center of public opinion. (See Figure I.) Second, secondary analysis of the NES data showed the mid-points of public opinion on several issues (that were similar to those examined in the present study) were either on or very close to the mid-points of the scales (Abramson, Aldrich, Rohde, 1986; 1990).[5]

Third, we analyzed the 1992 NES data and found that the ideological distribution of the respondents (including both voters and non-voters) was a normal distribution (see Figure II) as theorized by Downs.[6] According to the same data, the means (center) of public opinion on issues measured by scales (aid to Blacks, health care, government service and spending, defense spending, and government involvement in jobs and standard of living) were very close to the mid-points of the scales (thus were close to a normal distribution).[7] (See Figures III to VII). Although the NES did not include all the issues that the present study analyzed, the fact that the several issues included by the NES and the respondents' ideology were (or close to) normal distributions coincided with the basic logic of the present study. In other words, in general, the center of public opinion usually falls in the middle of two extremes. As a result, we decided that it would be acceptable to assume the mid-point of the scale (of the present study) was close to the center of public opinion in reality.

In practice, the coders were instructed to treat the center of each scale as "neutral" or "middle-of-the-road," which followed the logic of the NES scales. When a respondent was read the definitions of the two extremes on an issue and presented with a 7-point NES scale, point-4 clearly represented a middle position. On a 5-point scale, the middle would be point 3.

Since coding was performed on each campaign individually, the coders were able to compare the relative stands of both candidates on each issue. Using the definitions of the two extremes and center as a guideline, the coders were able to determine the relative difference between the two candidates (based on press coverage) on each issue. A good example was when a candidate said "no new taxes" (which suggested neither cutting nor increasing taxes), the candidate was coded as being on point 3. When a news story stated that candidate A would increase taxes by $300 million while B would increase $150 million, then A was coded as being more extreme than B. In another state with a different political climate, if candidate C wanted to increase taxes by $5 million while D advocated only $2 million, then D would still be coded as being closer to the center. Therefore, the scales would work in various political environments where the distributions of public opinion or policy stands varied.

Measurement

The unit of analysis was the candidates. The unit of observation was a candidate's issue position as portrayed in a news article. A five-point scale corresponding to the left-right or liberal-conservative spectrum was constructed to measure the ideology of the candidate framed by each article.

The two extremes of the five-point scale were defined (see Appendix I). The selection of issues and the assignments of left-right position points were based on pre-tests of the sampled newspaper articles, and review of related literature, including issues examined in the National Election Studies. Thirteen issues (abortion, labor, business, crime punishment, gender equality, racial equality, environment protection, governmental involvement, health care, military budget, taxation, gay rights and welfare policy), as well as direct mention of ideological positions (labels), were studied. Each of the thirteen issues was placed in the context of the liberal-conservative spectrum. For example, conservative means being opposed to over-centralization of government power or advocacy of lower taxes whereas liberal emphasized a "regulated" free-market economy, and social equality.[8] A trained second coder viewed 12.62% (41) of the selected 325 newspaper article. The inter-coder reliability was 88.7%.

The analysis was to convert the ideological scores (from 1 to 5) of each candidate on each issue in each article to a measure of "how far the candidate is from the center of the ideological spectrum." The center "3" was re-coded into 0 (0 unit away from the center); 2 and 4 were coded into 1 (one unit away from the center); and 1 and 5 were coded as 2 (two units from the center). The distance of a candidate's ideological position from the center in a news story was summed, then averaged to yield a mean of the centrality score, namely, the "center mean." The center means of the winners and the losers were compared.

The original scores of issue positions were also calculated (namely, the "issue mean"), but were not utilized in determining centrist tendency. For example, in a newspaper article Candidate A was assigned a score of 2 on one issue, and a 4 on another; the issue mean would be 3 (the mean of 2 and 4), which superficially is the center. However, in fact this candidate was away from the center twice (for being 2 and 4 on two issues); thus the center mean would be 1.[9] By comparison, if Candidate B was assigned a score of 3 on one issue and 4 on another, then the issue mean would be 3.5, and center mean would be .5. Superficially Candidate B is more extreme then candidate a in terms of issue means (3.5 vs. 3.0, with 3.0 as the center). However, in fact B was closer to the center because B is away from the center for only 1 unit once (score 3's center mean was 0, and score 4's center mean was 1, and the average was .5), while A was away from the center for one unit twice (both 4's and 2's center means were 1, and the average was 1).

Nevertheless, the issue mean could still illustrate a general tendency of positions on the political spectrum, which will be discussed in the findings for answering one of the research questions.

Sampling & Period of Study

Nine major newspapers from nine states were chosen for this study: the *Denver Rocky Mountain News, Miami Herald, Los Angeles Daily News, Minneapolis Star Tribune, Boston Globe* , *Memphis Commercial Appeal, Philadelphia Inquirer, Detroit Free Press*, and *Wichita Eagle*. The selection of states (California, Colorado, Florida, Kansas, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee) in different geographic areas produced a geographically diverse sample. The samples from these 9 papers included 28 candidates, with 14 from the Democratic Party and 14 from the Republican Party. There were nine incumbents and three females among the candidates. The sample covered seven U.S. senatorial and seven gubernatorial campaigns. (See Appendix I.)

The sampling was based on three constructed weeks (Riffe, Aust & Lacy, 1993). The time period was from mid-September (after the primaries) to early November (the election day). A total of 325 articles, which provided issue information on the candidates, were selected and coded. These articles included news coverage, columns, and editorials with information reflecting issue stands of the candidates. Letters to the editor were excluded, unless they were written by a candidate stating issue stands. The news coverage included the content of debates, speeches, political advertising, and other forms of statements.

Among the 325 articles, 497 cases (units of observation) were found (one case is how a candidates is portrayed in a newspaper article; often an article covered both candidates). There were 1001 discussions of the 13 issues and ideological labels.[10] Among them, the issues of government involvement (187 times, or 18.68%), taxation (162 times, or 16.18%), criminal punishment (127 times, or 12.69%), welfare (102 times, or 10.19%), and ideological labels (97 times, or 9.69%) were most frequently discussed. (See Table 1.)

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Centrists were more likely to win

In comparing the "center means" of the winners and of the losers based on the analysis of news coverage, there was a significant difference between the winners' and losers' mean distances from the center in each of the campaigns. In 13 out of the 14 campaigns, the winners were always closer to the center. On average, winners (.6278) were closer to the center than losers (1.0598) in terms of center mean, with a possible range between 0 (center) and +2. (See Table 2.)

A paired-sample t-test was performed to compare winners' and losers' center-means in the 14 campaigns. The t-value was -4.48, p= .001 (2-tailed). Therefore, H_1 was supported: winners and losers differed on center-means. In other words, centrists (as portrayed by newspapers) were more likely to win. (See Table 2.)

As discussed earlier in the methodology section, issue-means do not tell us whether candidates are closer to the ideological center.
To test this argument, a pairwise t-test was performed on winners' and losers' issue-means. The t-value was .77, p= .454 (two-tailed). (See Table 2.)

However, issue means were also useful in supporting the centrist hypothesis. The data from the 14 election campaigns were combined. If we call each observation a case (how a candidate is portrayed in a single newspaper article), there are 497 cases. The distribution of candidates' ideology (i.e. the grand issue means of the 497 cases) coincided with the Downsian model (see Figure IX). It was a normal distribution with 68.7% of the cases falling between -1 and +1 standard deviation. This meant that most of the ideological stands of the candidates reflected in the media were situated at the center. This suggests that candidates compete to be portrayed as taking centrist issue positions.

In addition, candidates' ideological distribution (as portrayed by the newspaper) matches the public's distribution theorized by Downs (1957). This supports Downs' center-seeking theory. (If candidates' distribution were skewed, for example, it means that Downs' theory was in error as candidates did not care about being centrist).

The results listed above also suggested that the 1994 election result may not be a true right-wing victory since candidates wished to be portrayed as centrist and centrists were more likely to win.

Incumbents are more likely to be portrayed as centrist

As for H_2 (incumbents are more likely to be defined as centrists than challengers), an independent-sample t-test was performed on incumbents' and challengers' center-means in nine campaigns. (The five open-seat races were excluded.)

Incumbents' center-mean was .5876 (N = 9) and challengers' was 1.1476 (N = 9). The t-value was -12.04; p= .000 (two-tailed). Therefore, H_2 was supported: incumbents are more likely than challengers to be defined as centrist.[11]

Centrists are more likely to win in open-seat races

The third hypothesis eliminates the confounding variable of incumbency. It tests whether centrist candidates (as defined by the press) are more likely to win in open-seat races.

To test H_3, a pairwise t-test was performed on the winners' (N= 5; Mean= .5667) and losers' (N= 5; Mean= 1.0351) center-means in the five open-seat campaigns. The t-value was -6.08; p= .004 (two-tailed). Thus, H_3 was supported. In open-seat races where incumbency is not a factor, winners are still more likely to be portrayed as centrist than losers.

Important issues in elections

In answer to the research question about which issues appeared to make a contribution to election victories, paired sample t-tests of the center means of the winners and losers on each issue were performed.[12] (See Table 3 for Center Means and Table 4 for Issue Means.)

In four issues, winners and losers appeared to be significantly different in terms of center means: labor (n=8, t= -4.65, p= .002); racial equality (n=5, t=-3.03, p= .039); government role (n=14, t= -5.11, p= .000); and health care (n=11, t=-2.64, p= .025). (See Table 5.) Among these issues, only government's role (n=187) was one of the most mentioned issues. (See Table 1.)

In terms of issue means, only two issues differed: gender equality (n=3, t= -34.99, p= .001); and taxation (n=14, t= 2.78, p= .016). (See Table 6.)[13]

After identifying key issues with t-tests of center means, the issue means of these issues provided a picture of general issue positions on the political spectrum. (See Table 4.) As mentioned earlier, issue means may not be meaningful for analyzing a total center-seeking tendency because in any given article individual ideological scores may cancel each other out. The grand issue means of winners and losers of each issue (rather than counting the issue means on different issues in each news story), however, could illustrate the difference between winners and losers of each issue in the political continuum. Therefore, we should examine all six issues that were statistically significant in terms of either issue mean or center mean (see Tables 5 and 6).

On the issue of gender equality, candidates in general (total issue mean = 2.67) advocated slightly more favorable treatment toward women. However, losers (issue mean = 3.04) appeared to be more reluctant than winners (issue mean = 2.00).

Minority votes appeared to be important because the issue mean is on the left of the center (issue mean = 2.77). Losers (issue mean = 2.60) appeared to be more enthusiastic in courting minorities (mean = 2.94).

Big government versus small government is a popular topic nowadays, and candidates strive for a balance (issue mean = 3.03). Losers did not fully attempt to reduce the role of the government (issue mean = 2.95). Winners, on the other hand, wanted to increase its size by a small margin (issue mean = 3.10). To win votes, candidates are likely to promise more government services or money to the voters, or at least dare not cut too much "pork." This may explain why the grand issue mean of the issue of government involvement was close to the center, while winners appeared to be more generous than losers.[14]

Interestingly, in terms of taxation, the issue mean was 2.88, which suggested that all candidates might support slightly higher taxes.[15] However, winners in general stuck to "no new taxes" or to reduce somewhat (mean = 3.21), while losers were portrayed as favoring higher taxes (2.55).

Overall, it appears that candidates would not want to alienate the labor/union (issue mean = 2.79), but winners seemed to be more neutral (issue mean = 3.09) than losers (issue mean = 2.54).

Candidates in general supported slightly more government involvement in health care (issue mean = 2.48). Winners (issue mean = 2.84), however, appeared to be more reserved than losers (issue mean = 2.13).

An interpretation of the winners' and losers' differences on these issues should be done with caution. Please note that the identification of key issues above are based on paired-sample t-tests. On some issues the n (number of pairs) is small because in a campaign not both candidates addressed the same issues (and pairwise t-tests counted the mean of an issue only when both candidates addressed that issue). However, when we studied the issue means, we looked at the mean scores of all the winners and losers.

For instance, Issue A is addressed by 6 winners and 9 losers, but there might be only 3 pairs (and these 3 pairs are used for pairwise t-tests). When we look at the issue means, however, the winners' scores are based on all 6 candidates and the losers' are based on 9. Thus, if we count only the means included in pairwise t-tests, the picture would be slightly different.

Another way to identify key issues is to see which issues were most frequently mentioned (where total N is 497). These issues are listed in order: government involvement (N=187), taxation (N=162), criminal punishment (N=127), welfare/entitlement programs (N=102), and ideological labels (N=97). (See Table 1.)

We have discussed taxation and the role of government earlier. Severe criminal punishment echoes the trend of being tough on crime (issue mean = 4.04), but winners (3.99) seemed to be less harsh than losers (4.10).

Welfare and other entitlement programs were not popular among candidates (issue mean = 3.47), but winners (3.46) and losers (3.48) did not differ much on this issue.

As for ideological identification of the candidates, all tried to be centrist (issue mean = 2.90). Winners (2.98) had better success than losers (2.82) striving to be portrayed as moderates.

If we look at the issue means of all issues, an average candidate would be portrayed as being: 1) slightly pro-choice but tries to be neutral (2.95); 2) being friendly to business (3.52); 3) pro-environment (2.65); 4) pro-gay rights (2.14); 5) pro-gender equality (2.67); 6) maintaining governmental status quo or slightly minimizing (3.03); 7) wanting more government control in health care (2.48); 8) being called a moderate but with a liberal accent (2.90); 9) pro-labor (2.79); 10) increasing the military budget a small margin (3.14); 11) favoring harsher punishment of criminals (4.04); 12) pro-minority (2.77); 13) increasing taxes slightly (2.88); 14) and cutting welfare and other entitlements (3.47).

A winning candidate is not that different from the picture above. He or she would be portrayed as being: 1) favoring slightly more restrictions on abortion but still holding a neutral position (3.08); 2) pro-business (3.61); 3)

pro-environment (2.81); 4) clearly pro-gay rights (1.75); 5) strongly pro-women (2.00); 6) trimming a small slice off the government (3.10); 7) wanting more government control in health care (2.84); 8) being almost a "perfect" moderate (2.98); 9) pro-labor (2.79); 10) increasing military budget a small amount (3.17); 11) favoring tougher punishment on criminals (3.99); 12) pro-minority but trying to be impartial (2.94); 13) being a realistic tax-cutter (3.21); and 14) reducing welfare and other entitlements (3.46).

A loser would share many of the same traits as the winner but differ on these issues: 1) being defined as slightly anti-gender equality (3.04); 2) advocating to increase government involvement (2.95); 3) being slightly more liberal (2.82); and 4) being defined as "tax-happy" (2.55). (See Table 3.)

DISCUSSION

Whether the 1994 election was right-wing victory

The empirical evidence of press coverage in this study did support the center-seeking hypothesis. Those who were portrayed by the media as centrists were more likely to win. Thus, the 1994 election was not a right-wing victory because winners were likely to be centrists.

It should be emphasized that the core purpose of this paper was not to "prove" a single winning strategy for political office seekers.[16] The goals included: 1) to provide empirical evidence for a hypothesis developed by political scientists; 2) to test this center-seeking theory by examining an election that appeared to be against it; and 3) most importantly, to illustrate the influence of mass media in such process, which has not been emphasized by political studies of the Downsian tradition.

The present study supported the center-seeking hypothesis. As mentioned earlier in the literature review, candidates may seek the middle ground to win elections. Although an office holder is supported by only a portion of the voters, he or she is elected to be the leader of the whole population. In order to serve all the people with different ideologies, the center seems to be a reasonable position.

Due to the limitation of the method (which examined only how the media portrayed the candidates during the campaign period), there is no way we could actually know a candidate's "real" ideological stance. As a result, candidates who appeared to be centrists in press coverage may become more extreme after elected and consequently adopt right or left-leaning policies. Thus, one may argue that the 1994 election was indeed a right-wing victory based on elected candidates' policy stands. This would be a good topic for additional exploration.

It would be ideal to further investigate the influence of certain issues in terms of election outcomes. The findings of the present study suggested four key issues based on pairwise t-tests on center means (see Table 5). Interestingly, most issues considered important (such as abortion and taxation) did not seem to carry much weight.[17] A possible explanation is that all candidates knew these issues were crucial so they did not dare to differ much from each other (in order not to appear to be too extreme by comparison).[18]

Important Issues

With increased methodological sophistication, researchers should be able to address the question raised by Page (1978) regarding which issues carry more weight, and thus may have a larger impact on election outcomes.[19]

One way to accomplish this is to survey voters during a campaign, asking them to rank issues in the order of salience, then using this information in weighing those issues.

As discussed earlier, winning candidates tended to take a mixture of socially liberal and fiscally conservative positions. In our findings, in terms of winners' issue means (on the 13 issues and ideological label), 8 times they were on the right side of center, and 6 times on the left. This again suggested that the 1994 election might not be a right-wing victory; otherwise the winners would have been on the right side of the center on most issues.

If social and fiscal issues can be separated and assigned different weights, it might be possible to examine whether the 1994 election was actually a fiscally right and socially left victory.[20] Also, with analysis of more campaigns (especially congressional races), we can build a stronger case against the right-wing victory assumption.

Measurement of the Center

A methodological issue that should be further addressed is the definition of the center. As what Page and other researchers have faced, as mentioned in the literature review, the definition of the center is problematic. In this present study, only 5 out of 14 issues had a mean on the right side of the center (based on issue means). However, if the "real center" in an election was actually 2.0 or 3.7, the outcome may be different. The 1992 national data were used to assume that the centers of public opinion in 1994 in the nine states fell on the mid-points of the scales. Future studies may want to investigate the methodological aspect in order to examine the center-seeking hypothesis with more scrutiny and accuracy. For example, it would be ideal to examine press coverage of campaigns in the same year the NES survey is also conducted. This could avoid the possibility that the public's ideological distribution have changed over time. Or, surveys should be conducted in individual states and the results compared with local press coverage. Local surveys could cover timely issues that occur during the campaign and are unique to individual environments.

Due to the limitation of the NES data, we were not able to run extensive analyses to examine whether the scale of each issue in the present study corresponded with the general distribution of public opinion. This could only be done if all 13 issues were also measured with scales in the NES, and the means of public opinion on those issues also fell on the centers of the scales. However, since respondents' ideologies and most of the available issues suggested a normal distribution, the measurement used in the present studies appeared to be acceptable. It can be argued that the scale in the present study can be used to test the "real" centers of the issues. Because the NES scales have been used many times and with a large national sample each time, their validity and reliability should be of little doubt. Using a tool similar to the NES scale for the present study should be acceptable.

It should be noted that this present study was based on a macro theory. Using empirical data (which is more micro by nature) to test a macro theory, problems are likely to occur. Therefore, minor differences (such as the fact that certain NES issues have slightly skewed distributions) should be tolerated if the "whole picture" appears to be correct. The scaling, coding and definition of center of the present study should be acceptable (and consequently the findings). The high inter-coder reliability offered additional confidence.

Representativeness of Samples

The samples in this study were not randomly selected. However, geographical representation was considered. In terms of whether these nine states were representative (for the purpose of generalization), the NES data provided support. We examined the (population's) ideological distributions of these states, each suggested a central tendency (i.e. centrists are the majority). When the nine states were combined, it was a normal distribution (Figure X), as was the distribution of the nation (see Figure II). This suggested that the public opinion in general in these states had a normal distribution. In other words, the means of public opinion should be close to the centers of the scales.

As for the selection of campaigns, there were more open-races in our samples than in reality (considering the highly re-election rate) because they were needed to control the incumbency factor in the analysis. Although our findings suggested that the 1994 election was not a right-wing victory, it was no doubt a Republican success. In our sample of 28 candidates, only four Democrats won (14%). This reflected the Republican gain although the percentage might not match the reality. Because of these, it can be argued that our samples were representative; thus the findings can be generalized.

Further Research

As for further research, we suggest adding a candidate-cleavage hypothesis. If candidates of general elections compete for the center in order to win, this should also occur in primaries. In other words, theoretically, candidates should first compete for the center in their own party primaries to win nomination, then compete again for the center in the general elections (Page, 1978). The centers of primaries and the general elections should be different, considering the variance between parties. Therefore, over time party nominees should move from the partisan centers to the general public center (which is the center of the political spectrum).

This argument was supported by a political analyst who stated that running "idea-based" campaigns were primary-based strategies. For general elections, "the dominant characteristic is the move to the center in an attempt to appeal to the independent voters" (Lehigh & Phillips, 1994).

Similar to the theoretical two-stage center-seeking argument, a political marketing model also supports the movement hypothesis. Newman used marketing concepts to explain political campaigns. According to him, when a campaign moves from one stage to another, "the segments that are targeted" would change. Consequently, the "candidate positioning" should move (1994: 11-12). Although Newman did not specify that candidates would change stands on particular issues, his theory suggested that candidates may shift between different stages of a campaign.

Based on Page's and Newman's theories, we would hypothesize that candidates move to the center over time between the primaries and general election. Page's study was conducted more than a decade ago. The candidate-cleavage hypothesis is due for a test with more recent information.

Notes

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[1] Downs developed various theories and models in his book (1957). For a review critique of studies following the Downsian tradition, please see Page (1978), chapter 2. The present study chose only one of Downs' models (Figure I) that matches the distribution of the population's' ideology (Figure II).

[2] Surveys conducted by the Survey Research Center/Center for Political Studies at the University of Michigan), which are considered the authority on election survey studies in the U.S.

[3] The multi-dimensional spatial model of measurement could be a good attempt to tackle the problems of weighing and the inter-relationships between issues and other variables, as illustrated in the study by Barnett, Serota & Taylor (1976).

[4] Incumbents are more likely to be centrist because of two reasons. First, if H_1 is true, incumbents had to be centrist to be elected in the first place. Second, one of the operationalizations of "center" in this paper is the current state of the law of situation in an environment. Incumbents are more likely to make the current law or define the current situation/ In this case, they are centrist by definition.

[5] They included government spending and services, defense spending, government's involvement in job and standard of living, aid to minorities, and women's status. The median voter's stands were either on or very close to the mid-points of the scales. The only exception was women's status in 1988, which is close to point 1.

[6] The author would like to thank Professor William Flanigan for providing the NES data and codebooks.

[7] Like the 1988 data, the only exception was women's status, of which the mean was very close to point 1 (i.e., men and women should be equal). Many other issues were not measured with scales in the National Election Studies (Flanigan, 1992). In addition, although the issues mentioned showed slightly skewed distributions, the curves suggested that they were close to normal distributions. The peaks of the curves were close to the centers of each scale. In other words, most people's issue positions were close to the center. As a result, candidates appeared to be centrist were likely to win.

[8] The construction of the left-right scales and definitions of their position points utilized information from Jamieson (1992A & B), Parenti (1988), Jennings (1992), Smith (1990), Weaver, Grabber, McCombs & Eyal (1981), Political parties of the world (1984: 492-5), Asher (1992: 27), Goldfarb (1991:82-117), Page (1978), and Flanigan (1988, 1992).

[9] The center mean and issue mean were calculated independently; otherwise, the results would be misleading. For example, if the center mean was directly translated into issue mean, a 2 and 4 would yield an issue mean of 3, which would be a center mean of 0. However, the way we actually calculated was to translate 2 and 4 into a center score of 1 twice, and the center mean was 1.

[10] Direct mention of ideological stands, such as being a liberal or conservative, was not considered as an issue, but was included in the calculation of "center means" and "issue means."

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[11] If we consider all 14 campaigns, H_2 was still supported. Incumbents' (N=9) center-mean (.6525) was lower than challengers' (N=19) (.9344). The t-value was -2.56; p= .017 (two-tailed). However, logically we should consider only the 9 campaigns and exclude the five open-seat races.

[12] Please note that not all issues were discussed in all campaigns. Therefore, N's in some tests were lower than in others.

[13] Earlier we argued that issue means did not matter. That was because when we calculated issue means of individual candidates, we averaged their issue mean scores on all the issues. As a result, there was no need to analyze individual candidates' grand issue means. For example, as discussed earlier, a candidate could be 2 on one issue and 4 on another, and the mean would be 3. However, this candidate is not a centrist since he or she is away from the center twice. On the other hand, the pairwise issue mean comparisons were sensible because these issue means were based on each single issue (so they would not cancel each other out with other issues).

[14] One might argue that this observation is wrong because the new Republican-controlled Congress is doing the opposite. However, it should be noted that the analysis was based on what the candidates said during the campaign (according to newspaper coverage). It is not impossible for candidates to say one thing to be elected then do another while in office. Breaking campaign promises is not uncommon in reality.

[15] Both winners and losers were on the left side of the center probably because all candidates liked to accuse each other of being "tax happy." Also, due to political reality, all office holders would have to raise taxes sooner or later.

[16] It seems that the center-seeking factor is not the only determination of election victories. For example, according to the 1992 NES data, Perot was perceived as being more moderate than Bush and Clinton. (This was based on respondents' placement of ideological labels between "extremely liberal" to "extremely conservative." If issue stands were taken into consideration, the results may be different. However, the NES asked respondents' perceptions of Clinton's and Bush's stands on only very few issues. Questions about Perot's stands were even not asked.) Nevertheless, in general the winner Clinton appeared to be slightly closer to the mid-point than Bush.

	Mean	Distance from Mean	Dis. from point 4.0
Center(mean)	4.206	0	0.206
Clinton	3.186	1.02	0.814
Bush	5.047	0.841	1.047
Perot	4.313	0.107	0.313

	Mean	Std Dev.	Mode	Median
Clinton	3.186	1.375	3.0	3.0
Bush	5.047	0.032	6.0	5.0
Perot	4.313	1.802	4.0	4.0

[17] The data in Table 3 showed that the mean difference between winners and losers on all issues was .38. Only the four issues singled out by center-mean pairwise t-tests (Table 5) had a mean difference larger than .38, which were labor, racial, government and health care. Issues that have

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been considered important such as abortion (.16), criminal punishment (.23), taxation (.33) and welfare (.20) all had a mean difference (between winners and losers) less than .38.

[18] This idea was suggested by Professor William D. Wells.

[19] To make the matter even more complicated, we need to consider what Shaffer (1987) pointed out: a specific issue may be a salient indicator of ideology at one time but could change later. In other words, which issues carry more weight may differ between elections.

[20] According to the data in Table 4, the five social issues (abortion, criminal punishment, gender, racial, and gay rights) have an issue mean of 2.91. The eight economic issues (labor, business, environment, government, health care, military, taxation, and welfare) had an issue mean of 3.00. This suggests that it is probably "safe" for candidates to be liberal on social issues, but their economic positions should be on the right of social ones. Winners' issue mean of social issues was 2.75. Their issue mean of fiscal issues was 3.16. This again suggests that it is desirable to be socially liberal and fiscally conservative.

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Appendix 1
Coding Sheet

Case number: ___________

1. Article #:____________

2. Campaign: ______

- 1. Colo. Gubernatorial
- 2. Fla. Gubernatorial
- 3. Calif. Gubernatorial
- 4. Minn. Gubernatorial
- 5. Mass. Gubernatorial
- 6. Calif. Senatorial
- 7. Minn. Senatorial
- 8. Mass. Senatorial
- 9. Pa. Senatorial
- 10. Tenn. Senatorial I: Sasser vs. Frist
- 11. Tenn. Senatorial II: Cooper vs. Thompson
- 12. Mich. Senatorial
- 13. Pa. Gubernatorial
- 14. Kan. Gubernatorial

3. Candidate: _______

- 1. Roy Romer (D)
- 2. Bruce Benson (R)
- 3. Lawton Chiles (D)
- 4. Jeb Bush (R)
- 5. Kathleen Brown (D)
- 6. Pete Wilson (R)
- 7. John Marty (D)
- 8. Arne Carlson (R)
- 9. Mark Roosevelt (D)
- 10. William Weld (R)
- 11. Dianne Feinstein (D)
- 12. Michael Huffington (R)
- 13. Ann Wynia (D)
- 14. Rod Grams (R)
- 15. Edward M. Kennedy (D)
- 16. Mitt Romney (R)
- 17. Harris Wofford (D)
- 18. Rick Santorum (R)
- 19. Jim Sasser (D)
- 20. Bill Frist (D)
- 21. Jim Cooper (D)
- 22. Fred Thompson (R)
- 23. Bob Carr (D)
- 24. Spencer Abraham (R)
- 25. Mark Singel (D)
- 26. Tom Ridge (R)
- 27. Jim Slattery (D)
- 28. Bill Graves (R)

4. Win/Lose: _________

- 1. winner: (1, 3, 6, 8, 10, 11, 14, 15, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28)
- 2. loser

5. Party: _____

- 1. Republican
- 2. Democrat

6. Sex: _________

- 1. Female (5, 11, 13)
- 2. Male

7. Incumbent: _____

- 1. Yes: (1, 3, 6, 8, 10, 11, 15, 17, 19)
- 2. No

8. Newspaper: ______
   1. Colo. Denver Rocky Mountain News
   2. Fla. Miami Herald
   3. Calif. Los Angeles Daily News
   4. Minn. Minneapolis Star Tribune
   5. Mass. Boston Globe
   6. Tenn. Commercial Appeal
   7. Mich. Detroit Free Press
   8. Pa. Philadelphia Inquirer
   9. Kan. Wichita Eagle

9. Publication Date: ____/____
MM / DD

10. Page #: _____

11. Section : ________
   1. front section (news)
   2. metro/local
   3. editorial
   4. other

12-14. Type of content: __________
   1. debate
   2. advertising
   3. interview/statement/speech
   4. game: poll/strategy/endorsement/running mate/staff
   5. past performance/record
   6. analysis/editorial
   7. other

Ideological Spectrum

Ideology(self-claim): 1----------2----------3----------4----------5 n/a (9)

1. extremely liberal

5. extremely conservative

Abortion: 1----------2----------3----------4----------5 n/a (9)

1. no restriction on abortion

5. oppose all abortion

Labor: 1----------2----------3----------4----------5 n/a (9)

1. strongly support labor/union

5. strongly anti-labor

Crime Punishment: 1----------2----------3----------4----------5 n/a (9)

1. lenient punishment; (focus on prevention, e.g., social programs) (society's fault)

5. severe punishment e.g., the death penalty (criminals' personal responsibility)

Gender equality: 1----------2----------3----------4----------5 n/a (9)

1. women are/ should be equal

5. Place is at home/ implying inferiority

Racial Equality: 1-------------2------------3-------------4------------5 n/a (9)

1. pro-minority rights/treatments e.g., affirmative action

5. anti-favorable treatments/ rights

Business: 1----------2----------3----------4----------5 n/a (9)

1. highly anti-business in general

5. highly pro-business in general

Environment: 1----------2----------3----------4----------5 n/a (9)

1. earth absolutely first; strong environ. protection

5. little/no consideration on environ.

protection

Government involvement: 1----------2----------3----------4----------5 n/a (9)

1. more govt's involvement/ regulation/ spending

5. "small government;" little or no govt. involvement/ regulation; autonomy

Health care/ insurance: 1----------2----------3----------4----------5 n/a (9)

1. total government run/ controlled system

5. total privately run system

Military spending: 1----------2----------3----------4----------5 n/a (9)

1. greatly decrease

5. greatly increase

Taxation: 1----------2----------3----------4----------5 n/a (9)

1. much higher in general

5. much lower

Welfare: 1----------2----------3----------4----------5 n/a (9)

1. greatly expand the system (including other entitlements)

5. greatly reduce/ abolish the system

Gay rights: 1----------2----------3----------4----------5 n/a (9)

1. strongly support

5. strongly anti-

Table 1
Frequency of Issue Discussion

	N (based on newspaper articles)
Abortion	44
Business	45
Environment	32
Gay rights	10
Gender	23
Government	187
Health care	56
Ideology	97
Labor	48
Military	33
Criminal	127
Racial	35
Taxes	162
Welfare	102
Total	1001

Table 2

Differences between Winners and Losers on Center Means and Issue Means

Campaign	Center Mean		Issue Mean	
	Winner	Loser	Winner	Loser
1	.5950	1.0973	2.8807	3.9867
2	.6847	1.1323	2.6087	3.9505
3	.5833	1.0577	3.3170	2.8654
4	.5000	1.3294	2.9474	1.9453
5	.5704	1.0973	3.2381	3.0873
6	.4343	1.2118	3.0414	4.1518
7*	.6316	1.1635	3.6316	2.0505
8	.7500	.9803	2.5179	3.8479
9	1.2338	.5667	4.1827	2.7890
10	.6036	1.1886	3.5664	2.3690
11*	.2575	.9408	3.2575	2.8350
12*	.7414	.9658	3.7411	2.5517
13*	.7868	1.1723	3.5732	3.3117
14*	.4164	.9333	3.3693	3.3000
Mean	.6278	1.0598	3.2766	3.0606
Std. dev.	.226	.182	.455	.717
Std. err.	.060	.049	.122	.192

Center Mean	(N=14)	Issue Mean	(N=14)
Winner	.6278	Winner	3.2766
Loser	1.0598	Loser	3.0606
Pairwise t	t= -4.48		t= .77
p (2-tailed) (alpha= .05)	p= .001		p= .454

*Open-seat races

Table 3
Center Means

Center-M	Candidate	N	Mean	SE	SD	Mean Difference
Ideology	Winner	12	.73	.18	.63	.14
	Loser	12	.87	.14	.48	
	Total	24	.80	.11	.55	
Abortion	W	10	.57	.16	.51	.16
	L	10	.73	.17	.53	
	Total	20	.65	.12	.52	
Labor	W	9	.24	.13	.38	.84
	L	11	1.08	.06	.18	
	Total	20	.70	.11	.51	
Crime	W	13	1.01	.13	.48	.23
	L	12	1.24	.19	.65	
	Total	25	1.12	.11	.57	
Gender	W	5	1.00	.00	.00	.07
	L	9	1.07	.06	.17	
	Total	14	1.05	.04	.14	
Racial	W	8	.56	.15	.42	.59
	L	8	1.15	.12	.35	
	Total	16	.86	.12	.48	
Business	W	11	.61	.13	.44	.32
	L	10	.93	.04	.14	
	Total	21	.76	.08	.36	
Environ.	W	9	.19	.09	.28	.76
	L	7	.95	.25	.65	
	Total	16	.52	.15	.61	
Govt.	W	14	.43	.12	.45	.65
	L	14	1.08	.07	.26	
	Total	28	.76	.09	.49	
Health	W	11	.49	.17	.57	.68
	L	11	1.17	.14	.46	
	Total	22	.83	.13	.62	
Military	W	8	.71	.13	.36	.35
	L	9	1.06	.13	.39	
	Total	17	.89	.10	.41	
Taxation	W	14	.59	.08	.29	.33
	L	14	.92	.14	.54	
	Total	28	.76	.09	.45	
Welfare	W	12	.73	.09	.31	.20
	L	13	.93	.10	.36	
	Total	25	.83	.07	.34	
Gay Rights	W	2	1.25	.25	.35	.05
	L	5	1.30	.20	.45	
	Total	7	1.29	.15	.39	
Total	W		.65			.38
	L		1.03			
	Total		.84			

Table 4
Issue Means

Center-M	Candidate	N	Mean	SE	SD
Ideology	Winner	12	2.98	.29	.99
	Loser	12	2.82	.28	.96
	Total	24	2.90	.20	.96
Abortion	W	10	3.08	.25	.78
	L	10	2.83	.29	.91
	Total	20	2.95	.19	.84
Labor	W	9	3.09	.15	.45
	L	11	2.54	.30	.99
	Total	20	2.79	.18	.82
Crime	W	13	3.99	.14	.51
	L	12	4.10	.23	.78
	Total	25	4.04	.13	.64
Gender	W	5	2.00	.00	.00
	L	9	3.04	.37	1.11
	Total	14	2.67	.27	1.01
Racial	W	8	2.94	.26	.73
	L	8	2.60	.36	1.03
	Total	16	2.77	.22	.88
Business	W	11	3.61	.13	.44
	L	10	3.43	.20	.63
	Total	21	3.52	.12	.53
Environ.	W	9	2.81	.09	.28
	L	7	2.43	.40	1.05
	Total	16	2.65	.18	.72
Govt.	W	14	3.10	.15	.58
	L	14	2.95	.25	.52
	Total	28	3.03	.14	.76
Health	W	11	2.84	.17	.58
	L	11	2.13	.27	.89
	Total	22	2.48	.17	.82
Military	W	8	3.17	.29	.82
	L	9	3.12	.38	1.14
	Total	17	3.14	.24	.97
Taxation	W	14	3.21	.16	.59
	L	14	2.55	.18	.65
	Total	28	2.88	.13	.70
Welfare	W	12	3.46	.19	.67
	L	13	3.48	.21	.76
	Total	25	3.47	.14	.70
Gay Rights	W	2	1.75	.25	.35
	L	5	2.30	.54	1.20
	Total	7	2.14	.39	1.03

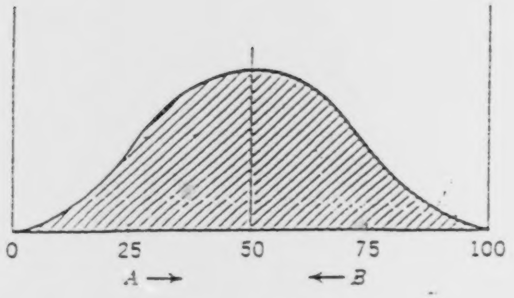
Table 5
Paired Sample t-tests on Center Means

Issue	N (pair)		Mean	t	p
Labor	8	Winner	.2708	-4.65	.002
		Loser	1.0424		
Racial	5	Winner	.4000	-3.03	.039
		Loser	1.0400		
Govt.	14	Winner	.4324	-5.11	.000
		Loser	1.0782		
Health	11	Winner	.4924	-2.64	.025
		Loser	1.1734		

Table 6
Paired Sample t-tests on Issue Means

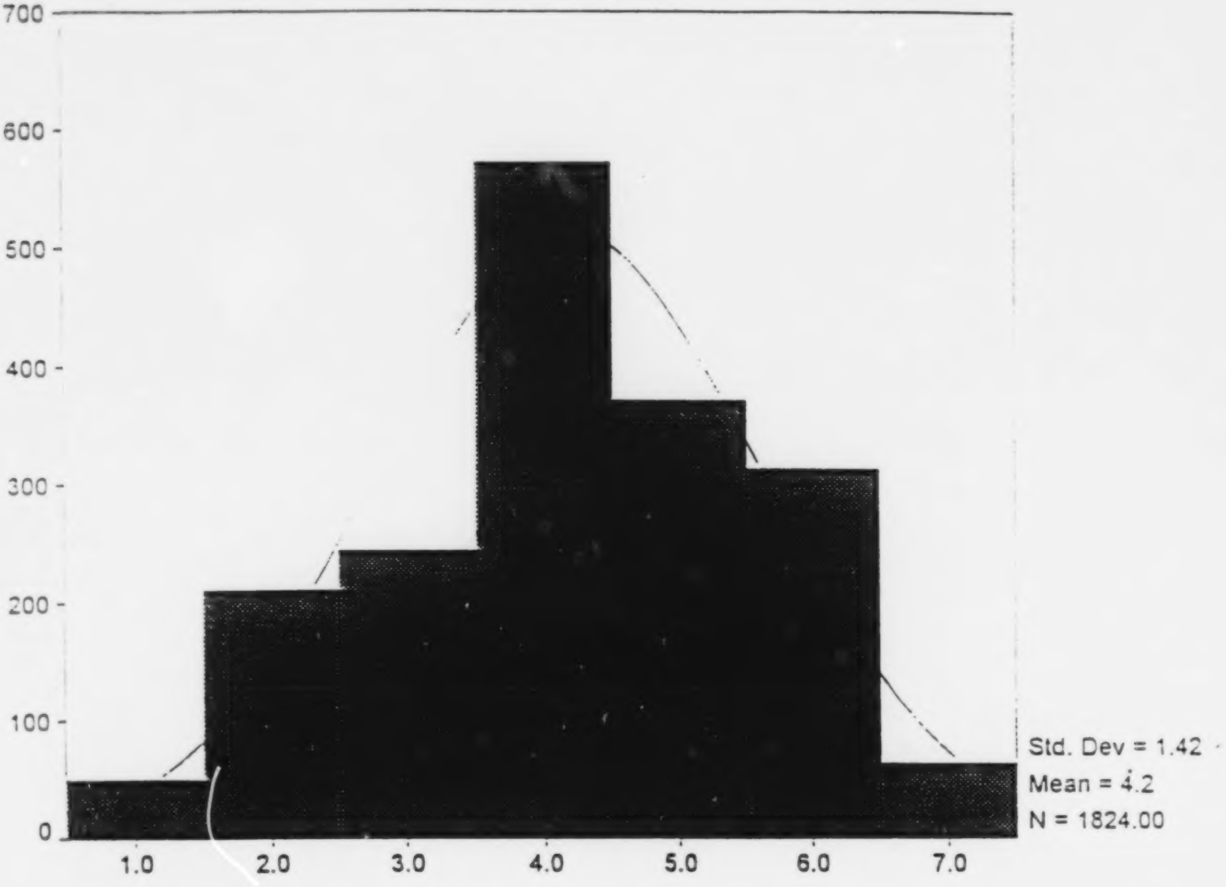
Issue	N (pair)		Mean	t	p
Gender	3	Winner	2.00	-34.99	.001
		Loser	3.94		
Taxation	14	Winner	3.21	2.78	.016
		Loser	2.55		

Figure I
Theoretical Distribution of Voters' Ideology



Source: Downs (1957:118)

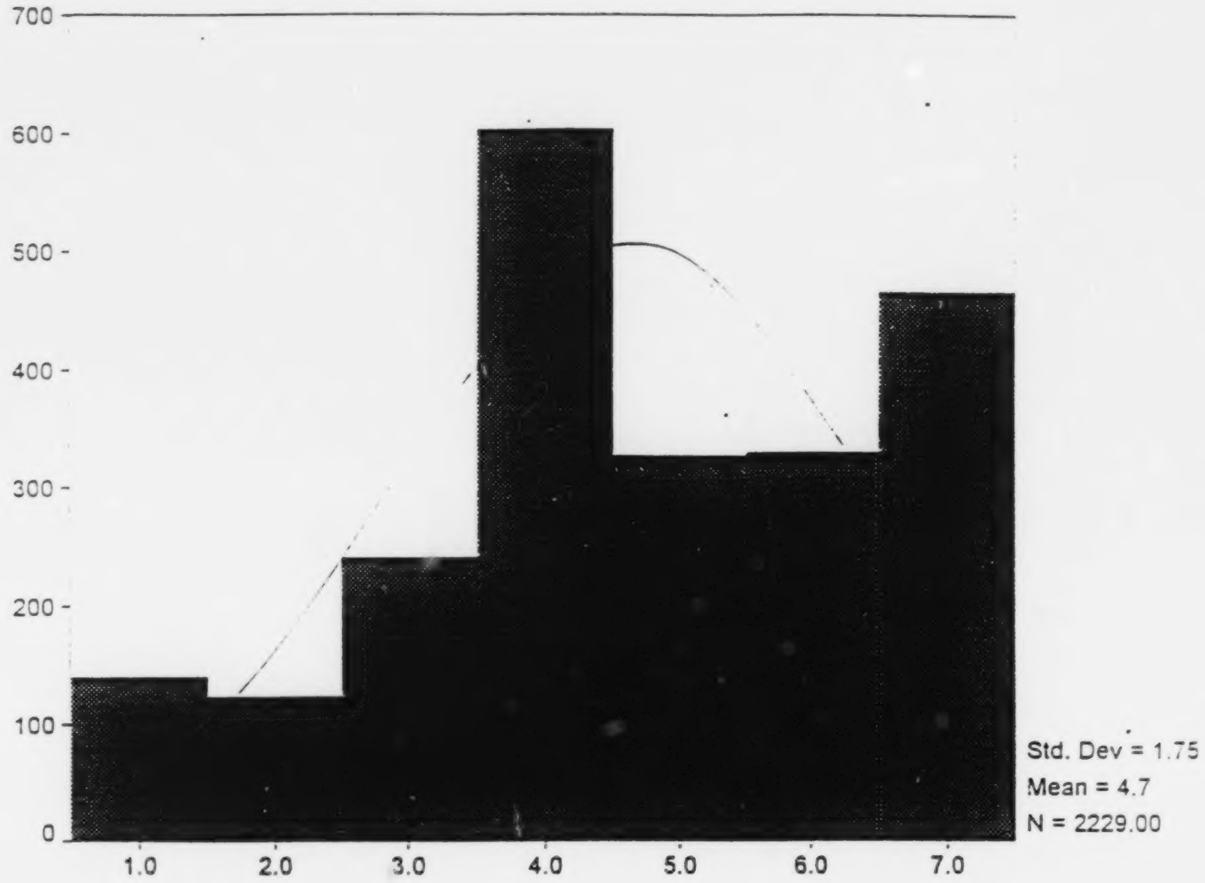
Figure II
Distribution of 1992 NES Respondents' Ideology



Value Label	Value	Frequency	%	Cum. %
Extremely Liberal	1	50	2.7	2.7
Liberal	2	210	11.5	14.3
Weak Liberal	3	244	13.4	27.6
Moderate	4	572	31.4	59.0
Weak Conservative	5	371	20.3	79.3
Conservative	6	313	17.2	96.5
Extremely Conservative	7	64	3.5	100.0

Mean	4.206	Std err	.033
Mode	4.000	Std dev	1.416
Median	4.000	Variance	2.005

Figure III
Distribution of 1992 NES Respondents' Stands on Government Aid to Blacks

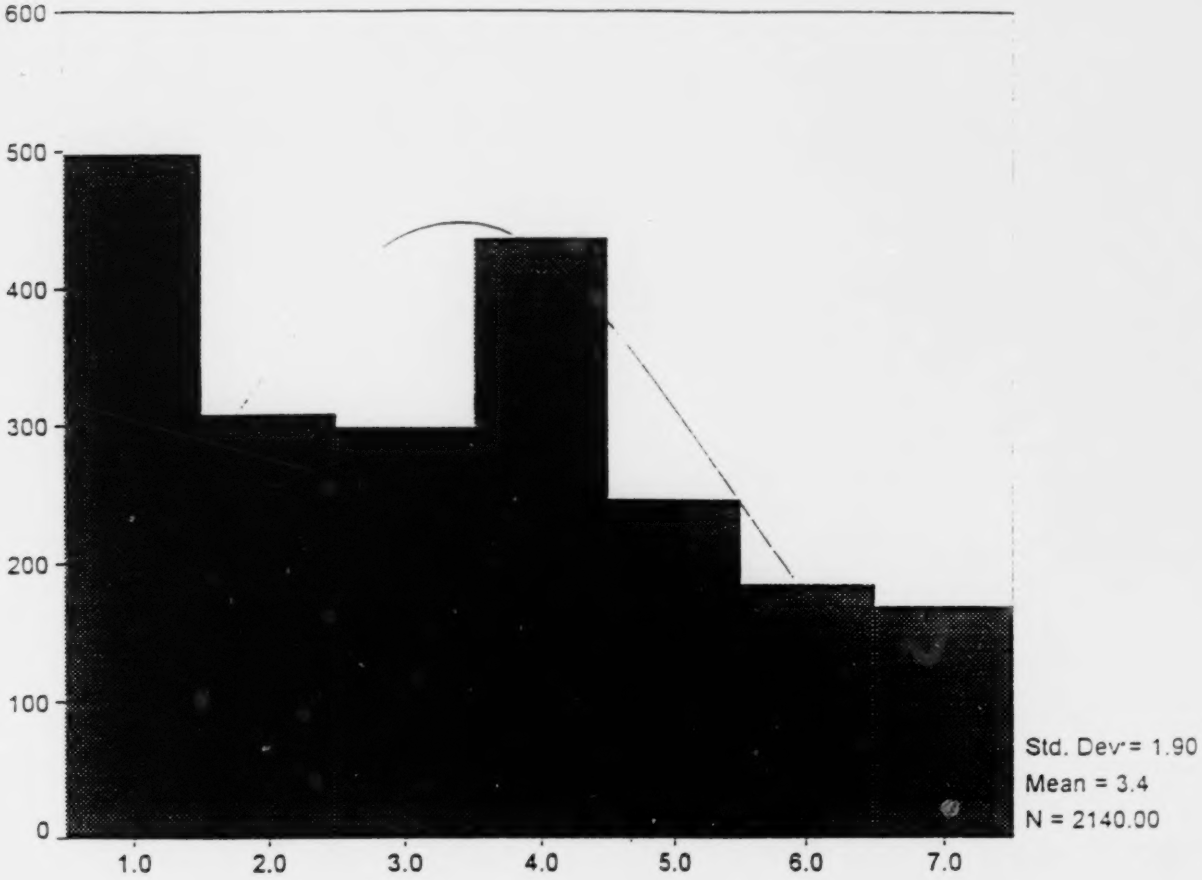


Q: Some people feel that the government in Washington should make every effort to improve the social and economic positions of blacks. Others feel that the government should not make any special effort to help blacks because they should help themselves. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this? <"Don't know," "N/A" or "Haven't thought much" were counted as missing in the present study.>

1. Government should help blacks
7. Blacks should help themselves.

Mean	4.664	Std err	.037
Mode	4.000	Std dev	1.754
Median	5.000	Variance	3.075

Figure IV
Distribution of 1992 NES Respondents' Stands on Medical Insurance

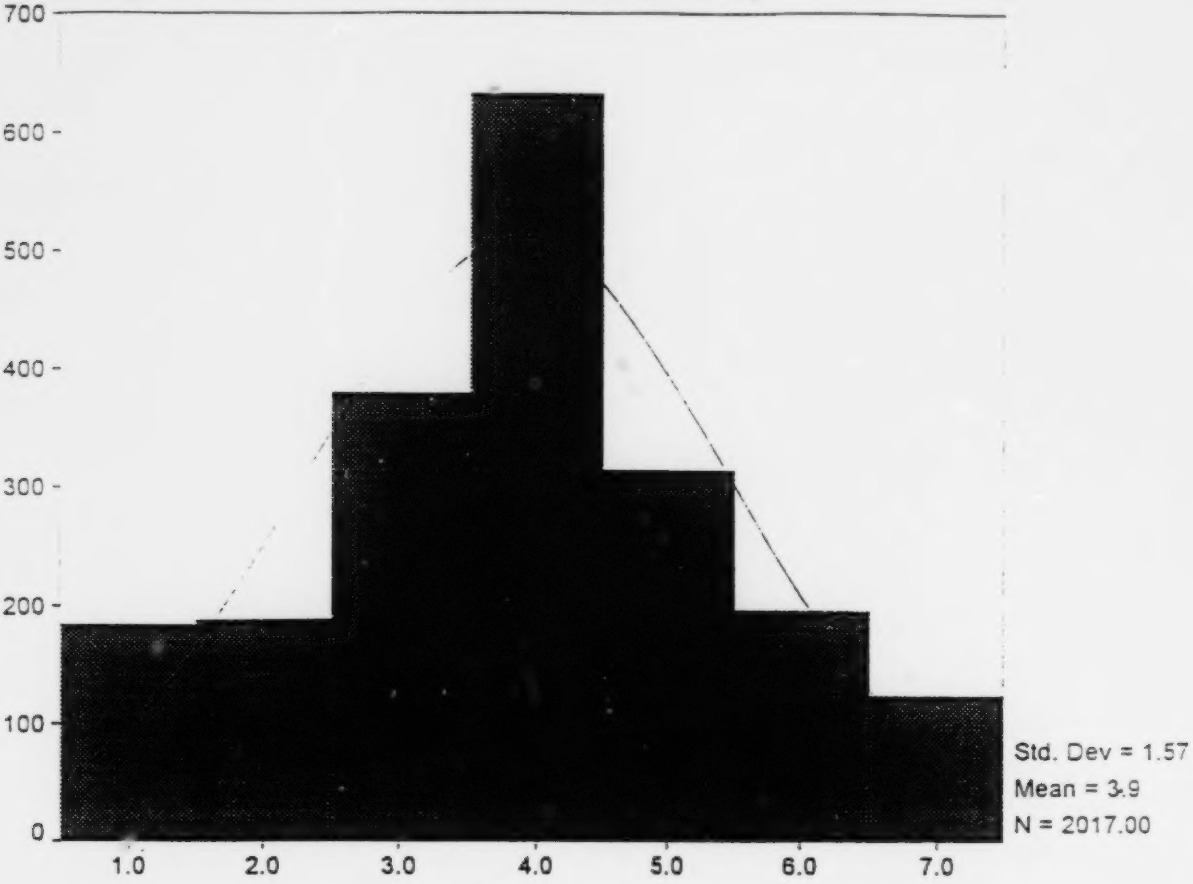


Q: There is much concern about the rapid rise in medical and hospital costs. Some people feel there should be a government insurance plan which would cover all medical and hospital expenses for everyone. Others feel that all medical expenses should be paid by individuals, and through private insurance plans like Blue Cross or other company paid plans. Would you please place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this? <"Don't know," "N/A" or "Haven't thought much" were counted as missing in the present study.>

1. Government insurance plan
7. Private insurance plan.

Mean	3.400	Std err	.041
Mode	1.000	Std dev	1.903
Median	3.000	Variance	3.622

Figure V
Distribution of 1992 NES Respondents' Stands on Government Services vs. Spending

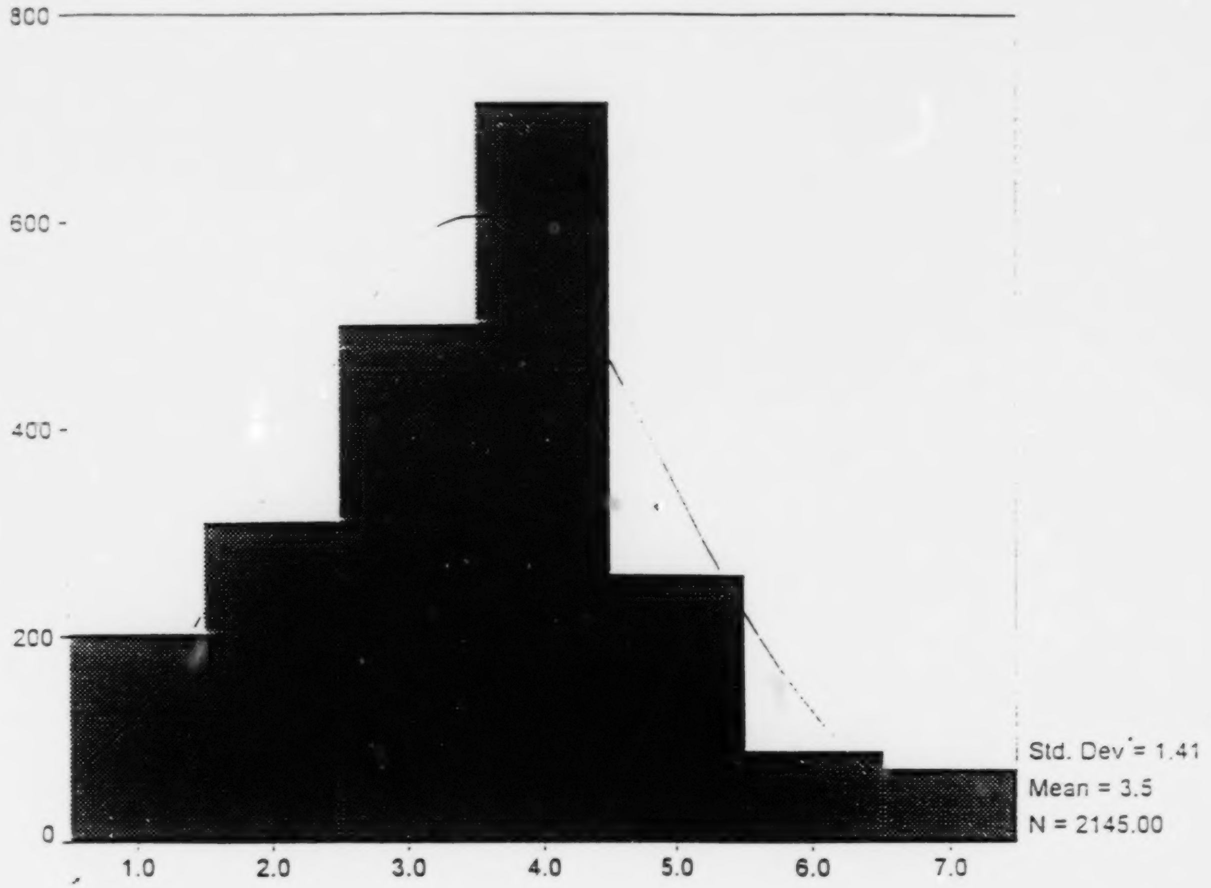


Q: Some people think that the government should provide fewer services, even in areas such as health and education in order to reduce spending. Suppose these people are at one end of the scale at point 1. Other people feel it is important for the government to provide many more services even if it means an increase in spending. Suppose these people are at the other end, at point 7. And of course, some other people have opinions somewhere in between at points 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this? <"Don't know," "N/A" or "Haven't thought much" were counted as missing in the present study.>

1. Government provides many more services, increase spending a lot
7. Government provide many fewer services, reduce spending a lot
<The present author reversed the direction of the original scale in order to fit the left-right/liberal-conservative arrangement.>

Mean	3.886	Std err	.035
Mode	4.000	Std dev	1.571
Median	4.000	Variance	2.468

Figure VI
Distribution of 1992 NES Respondents' Stands on Defense Spending

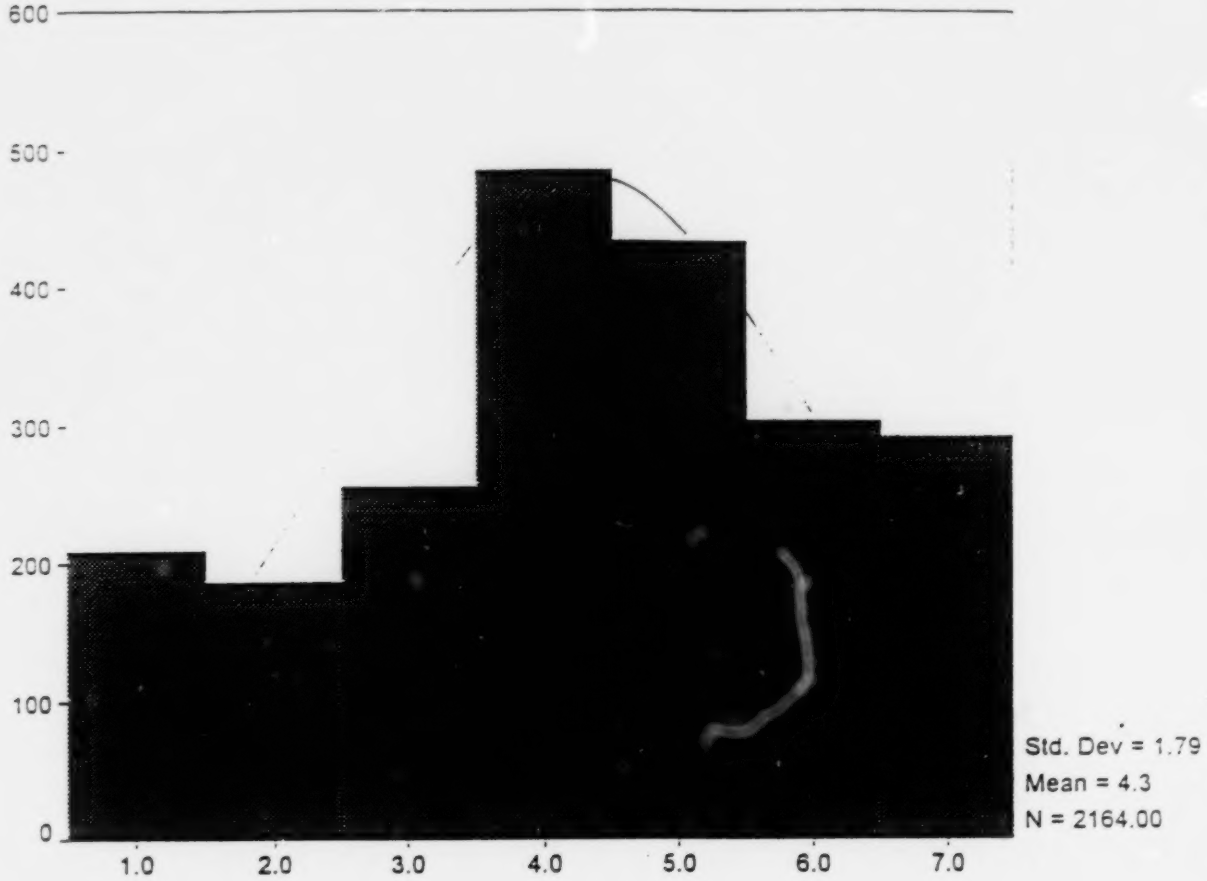


Q: Some people believe that we should spend much less money for defense. Others feel that defense spending should be greatly increased. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this? <"Don't know," "N/A" or "Haven't thought much" were counted as missing in the present study>

1. Greatly decrease defense spending
7. Greatly increase defense spending

Mean	3.497	Std err	.030
Mode	4.000	Std dev	1.411
Median	4.000	Variance	1.990

Figure VII
Distribution of 1992 NES Respondents' Stands on Government's Involvement in Employment and Standard of Living

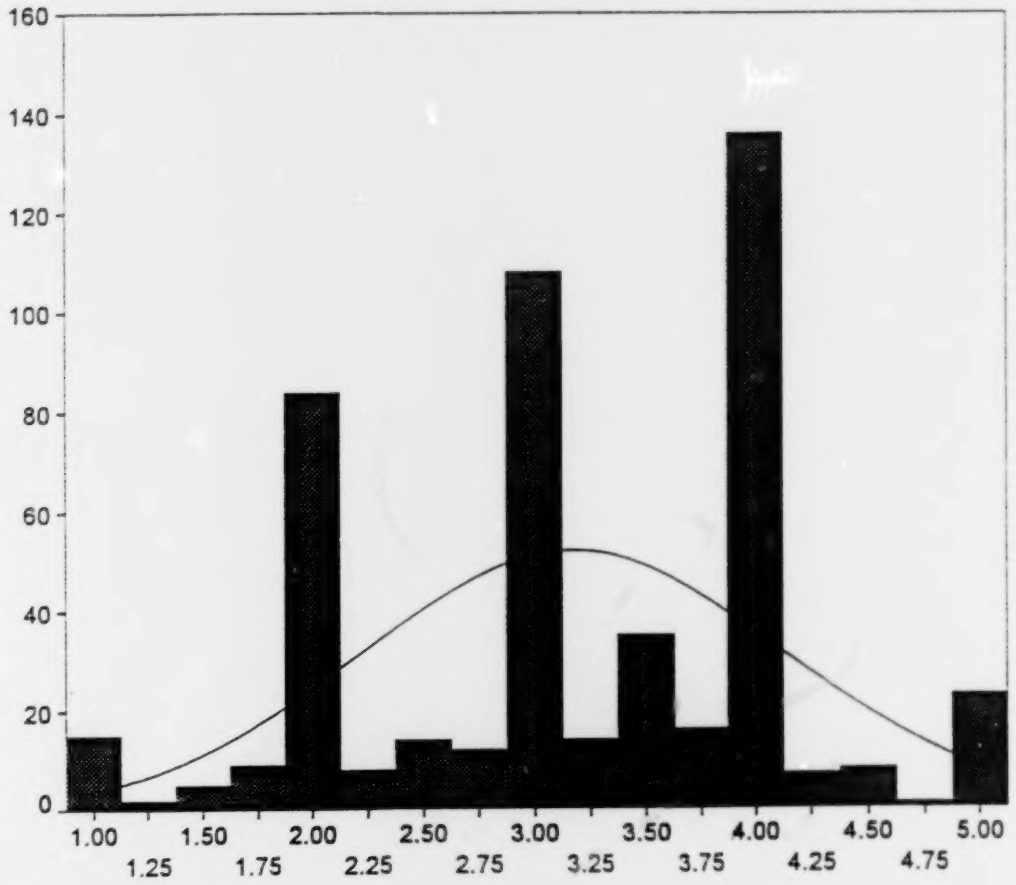


Q: Some people feel that government in Washington should see to it that every person has a job and a good standard of living. Others think the government should just let each person get ahead on their own. Would you please place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this? <"Don't know," "N/A" or "Haven't thought much" were counted as missing in the present study>

1. Government see to job and good standard of living
7. Government let each person get ahead

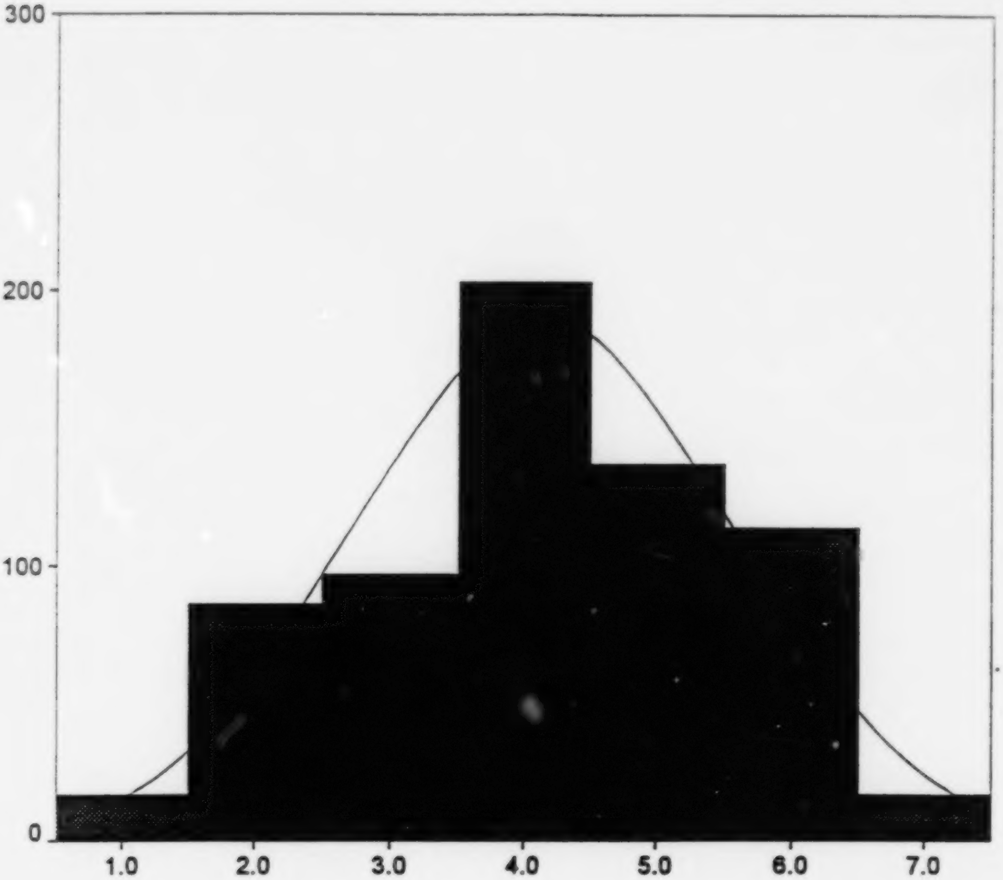
Mean	4.305	Std err	.039
Mode	4.000	Std dev	1.793
Median	4.000	Variance	3.214

Figure IX
Distribution of Candidates' Ideology of the 14 Campaigns



Mean	3.172	Std error	.043
Mode	4.000	Std dev.	.951
Median	3.000	Variance	.904
N= 497			

Figure X
Distribution of Population's Ideology in the Nine States
(Based on the 1992 NES Data)



Value label:
1. Extremely Liberal 2. Liberal 3. Weak Liberal 4. Moderate
5. Weak Conservative 6. Conservative 7. Extremely Conservative

Mean	4.143	Std error	.054
Mode	4.000	Std. dev.	1.407
Median	4.000	Variance	1.980
N= 671			

RADIO STATION AGE DEMOGRAPHICS AND THE PUBLIC INTEREST

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RADIO STATION AGE DEMOGRAPHICS AND THE PUBLIC INTEREST

Kenneth D. Loomis

This study tested the extent that traditional radio audience demographics were predictive of listener satisfaction. Personal interviews and a mail questionnaire of 650 residents of a large midwestern community indicated the traditional audience demographic categories - such as age groups - were not significant predictors of listeners' satisfaction with the local programming. Rather, the extent that individuals interacted with different types of people influenced personal satisfaction with programming, as well as overall expectations of the medium.

RADIO STATION AGE DEMOGRAPHICS AND THE PUBLIC INTEREST

In the current deregulated broadcasting environment the market supposedly provides for the public interest through serving the goals of advertisers seeking a vehicle to reach consumers. It is assumed that the public interest is identified by advertisers who, seeking to accomodate the audiences' needs, finance appropriate programming.

This paper focuses on the relationship between age group demographics and audience satisfaction. Because advertisers have found it profitable to perceive consumers as members of specific age groups, commercial broadcasters have been compelled to conceptualize audiences in the same manner. One might assume - if the marketplace serves the public interest - that a number of different audience age groups are being pursued by advertisers and broadcasters, and that individuals in the demographically more "attractive" age groups are generally more satisfied with the programming.

This analysis explores the relationship of age groups to advertisers' goals, radio broadcasters' programming decisions, and listeners' satisfaction in one large size midwestern city. The objective is to provide empirical evidence - for this market - as to the efficacy of the public interest being understood as a function of the marketplace.

In 1981 the Federal Communications Commission began deregulating radio when it released its "Report and Order: In the Matter of Deregulation of Radio." (1) The doctrine presented a thorough and convincing argument that the marketplace was the best determinant of the public interest. Regarding broadcast programming, it defined the public interest as "the wants and needs of the public - what economists call consumer satisfaction," and reiterated that these wants and needs could best be satisfied by the competitive forces in the marketplace, rather than by government regulation. (2) It was claimed that, through the marketplace, broadcasters and advertisers would seek to serve specific, narrowly defined audience groups - and that the combination of these specialized audiences would represent the needs of the total public. (3)

The result of this deregulatory strategy is that listeners are perceived as members of consumer groups. The terms "public interest" and "marketplace" have therefore become interchangeable. As the Report and Order itself stated,

> It is not the public interest standard that we proposed to eliminate. . . Rather, since marketplace solutions can be consistent with public interest concerns, we sought to explore in the proceeding the question of whether or not in the context of radio the public interest can be met through the working of marketplace forces rather than by current Commission regulations. (4)

Thus, it seems rather straightforward that deregulation - and the adoption of a marketplace strategy - perceives listeners as consumers in a particular marketplace.

There may be two problems with this approach. First, because the majority of advertising dollars is spent in the pursuit of a theoretical, specifically defined group of people, the public represented by the marketplace may actually be quite narrow in its conception; (5) even though the model relies on the assumption that every significant group in society, every legitimate special interest, will be served by the business instincts of advertisers.

A second problem might stem from the fact that the audience demographics constructed by advertising agencies are artificial entities. In a sense, these narrowly defined attractive audiences exist only on paper. They do not reflect the individual natures of consumer sub-groups, nor how different people use the media in different ways. Just because a large number of individuals of similar age, income, gender, and race can be statistically grouped does not guarantee they have common tastes and needs. Research has indicated that radio audience groups of the same age have radical differences in their programming preferences. (6) Eileen R. Meehan argued that ratings (the application of age groups to station rankings) merely reflect the wishful thinking of advertisers and broadcasters:

> Ratings are tools designed by firms to achieve economic success - control over ratings production. Forms of measurement are selected on the basis of economic goals, not according to the rules of social science. Not everybody is wanted by advertisers, so a ratings firm must try to exclude those persons who are not in demand. (7)

Similarly, Dallas Smythe concluded, "The elements that make up a market simply do not exist on the broadcaster-program-audience axis. We are left therefore with metaphors - figures of speech, repeated by rote - that conceal the reality." (8) Therefore it is likely that the concept of "audience" is more complex than the conceptualization advertising agencies, and therefore broadcasters, use to make programming decisions.

Why then, do the ratings which some people believe conceptualize the audience on shakey ground continue to be faithfully utilized by the industry? Perhaps it is because no practical alternatives exist to the current system. The prevailing method of organizing individuals into specific audience demographic groups - based primarily on age - if nothing else, provides advertisers with something to look at. No other methodology exists which provides information in a quantifiable, concise form.

James G. Webster said there are five benefits to audience ratings data: (9)

1. They're flexible. Although he does not explain this benefit in great detail, presumably he means that one can manipulate numbers in any number of ways to elicit meaning.

2. Audience ratings are objective. Quantitative ratings methodologies are generally perceived as being unbiased.

3. Ratings are familiar. It is rare that a week passes without publication of the TV ratings from the previous seven day period.

4. Ratings are continual. Reports appear at regular intervals.

5. They're accessible. Newspapers, magazines, and journals containing ratings information are available to nearly everyone.

While Webster acknowledged that ratings are constructed for the benefit of advertisers, he believes the advantages of the system outweigh the shortcomings. However, Donald Hurwitz argued that who asks the questions, and for what purpose, axiomatically determines the nature of a ratings system. (10)

Hurwitz contended that ratings were devised, not for conveying accurate audience information, but for achieving industry needs: the ability to make money. Hence, the institutionalization of the ratings system precludes the industry from having to actually know its audience because financial success can be achieved by creative statistical maneuvering of meaningless numbers, derived from fictional demographic categories. (11)

While it seems evident our current ratings system has flaws, few concrete changes seem to be on the horizon. Criticism of our market driven media system is not new, its flaws having been challenged from its inception in the 1920s. (12) During this earlier period many fought for greater government involvement in broadcasting to counteract the natural shortcomings of the market. However, FCC efforts to interject format diversity on the radio medium have been virtually nonexistent, and without lasting effect. And, the FCC's claim that empirical evidence countering the marketplace philosophy does not exist, remains practically unchallenged.

Method

The larger project from which this analysis was gleaned surveyed a cross section probability sample of a large Midwestern market area, and asked respondents to judge how well the local radio programming reflected the community. If the FCC's prediction was accurate - that a number of different interest groups would be sought by advertisers - it is reasonable to assume that this respondent group would rate the radio formats as generally reflective of the diversity of people living in the community.

To facilitate this audience assessment, three phases of data collection were implemented. The first phase involved identifying the different types of listeners that the local radio stations identified as their target audiences. This was accomplished through personal interviews with each of the market's radio station general managers, and with personal interviews with executives and owners of five different local advertising agencies. Questions were asked as to how audience groups are identified, and then targeted, through various formats and programming features. It was anticipated that, if the FCC's expectations were realized, the advertisers and programmers would identify different community target audiences, and that these targets would roughly reflect the characteristics of the local population.

The radio station general managers and the advertising agency executives were interviewed over the two-and-a-half week period of October 7-26, 1993. (13) During preliminary telephone conversations with the radio managers, during which the interview appointments were arranged, each manager was asked to identify the advertising agencies in town that had the most expertise in buying radio time. From their recommendations, five agencies emerged as generally being considered the most active and proficient in purchasing radio. Then, the local owners or chief executives of each of these agencies were also contacted for interviews.

The study's second phase entailed surveying a probability sample of 650 adult individuals from the local market area, to determine how well these people felt local radio programming reflected the community's diverse interests. A mail questionnaire was designed to measure respondents' attitudes toward the group of radio formats in the market, and how well the respondents felt this collection of formats reflected the needs of the different groups people in the community. In the survey, respondents were asked if, ideally, the group of formats should be reflective of the community. Secondly, they were asked if the group of local stations reflected the diversity of the community. And finally, they were asked if they were personally satisfied with the local format choices. Questions were also included that pertained to topics such as race relations, gender equity, sexual preference, as well as respondents' perceptions of advertisers, and of "community." (14)

On January 11, 1994 the first mailing was sent to the randomly selected 650 area adults. This mailing included the survey booklet and a self-addressed, stamped return envelope, along with a cover letter explaining the project. One week later, on January 18, 1994 a reminder letter was sent to each respondent, encouraging them to complete the survey if they hadn't already done so. Three weeks following the second mailing, another letter, survey, and stamped return envelope were sent to the individuals who had not yet responded, providing them further encouragement to take part in the study.

Results

Before audience responses to the mail survey could be contextualized, it was helpful to understand the methods and practices of the local broadcasters and advertisers, and how these individuals identified and defined their consumer targets.

The Advertisers' Conceptualization of Consumers

During the conversations with the ad agency executives three main questions were asked of each interviewee:

1. How do you determine which consumer groups will be the targets of your clients' products?
2. What are the different demographic categories that you consider when deciding what stations will be in on the buy?
3. What demographic group is the most popular with your clients and why? How would you describe the ideal consumer?

From the executives' answers to these questions, it appeared that each had a sincere desire to serve their agency's clients.

Most of the executives expressed taking a personal interest in their clients' businesses, and even sensed sharing a partnership with their clients. Consequently, the executives felt an obligation to wisely spend their clients' advertising budgets - to ensure that the money was being spent to the greatest effect, and that as much exposure as possible was gained from each dollar spent.

The executives generally expressed valuing qualitative information about consumers - what the target consumers' lives were like, what their interests were, and how these individuals could be motivated to purchase a particular product. However, they also admitted to depending primarily on quantitative ratings data for most of their final decisions. All the advertising executives agreed that the age demographic of 25-54 is the one most often used to conceptualize the target audience. These responses represent the tone of all the ad exec's opinions:

> Twenty-five to fifty-four is what everybody in the world will tell you they want to target because that's really the only way they can take a good look at it in the broadest sense . . . 25-54 works pretty good. It is the biggest number of people out there too.

> Literally . . . 75% of your retailers and your service businesses are targeting a demographic between the ages of twenty-five and fifty-four. It's where the money is. It's where the active people are.

Consequently, there does not appear to be a wide range of audiences targeted by the advertisers in this market.

By viewing Table #1 one will notice that the target group used most often by these agencies is within the broader 25-54 Arbitron demographic. One will also notice that the "ideal consumer" of each of these agency executives is narrowed down even further so that a picture emerges of a college educated individual, preferably a woman in her thirties, living in a two-income family, with two children.

The advertising executives were generally uncomfortable in precisely defining target audiences for radio, but preferred to speak in terms of the broad age demographics of the Arbitron ratings company. They regarded their task as marketing a product to a mass audience. However, when they were pressed to specifically define the "ideal consumer," they all essentially described the same individual - someone between the ages of twenty-seven and forty, educated, white collar, in a two income family with children - as shown in Table 1. There does not appear to be a broad range of consumer-types being pursued by the advertisers. Again, the ad agency personnel appeared sincere in finding out as much as they could about their clients and the potential market for their products. Nevertheless, they felt bound by the constraints of doing business in a competitive industry where mass audiences are defined by a limited number of ratings categories. Consequently, advertisers defined the potential markets for various products in very similar - if not exactly the same - terms.

It should be again noted that generally the agency executives were not comfortable with narrowing down their target consumers so specifically. Their daily business decisions were based on the more broadly conceived targets of the 25-54 Arbitron demographic. Yet, when pressed to conceptualize the ideal consumer of most of their clients, their answers were strikingly similar.

What, then, caused these different individuals, working for different advertising agencies, and different clients, to conceptualize the ideal consumer in such a homogenous manner? The answer appears to lie with the realities of age-based ratings demographics. Even though advertising agencies value individualized, qualitative information about potential consumers, they ultimately conceptualize their target consumers through the age demographics of Arbitron ratings. By negotiating the purchase of airtime based on ratings, the executives are able to substantiate their decisions to themselves and to their clients. Additionally, the pursuit of young adult consumers, who are establishing their lifestyles, has historically proven profitable to advertisers. The fact that individuals in other age groups also purchase products, and the fact that the people within this one attractive, young adult age group have diverse interests, is beside the point to most individuals in advertising agencies. While they are sensitive to these realities, their job is to move product. One executive summarized it this way:

> Manufacturers, or advertisers, whoever they are, they got a business to run. They've got products to sell this quarter. They've got needs to get done, they've got backorders to get out. The daily business requires action. So we can't sit

here and theorize . . .

When the Federal Communications Commission deregulated radio broadcasting in 1981, it did so partly with the belief that the marketplace would seek to serve diverse audience interests. The report stated that as the deregulated marketplace encouraged new broadcasters to enter the industry, each radio station would seek to serve "specialized audiences." (15) These audiences would have unique demands and interests that the different stations would seek to serve. However, based on the interviews with these ad executives, and regardless of the efforts agencies expend on personally understanding their clients, it appears advertisers in this market are compelled not to picture their target consumers as being "specialized," but rather as being part of one profitable, easily identified, consumer-type. The influence that this conceptualization has had on the programming of radio formats became obvious in the interviews that followed with the area's radio station managers.

The Broadcasters' Conceptualization of Audiences

The general managers of each local radio station were interviewed to ascertain how they conceptualize the audiences of their stations. The general manager is usually the highest ranking individual at a station. He or she oversees all of the station's operations such as sales, programming, promotions, accounting, and engineering, and is ultimately responsible for the station's financial performance.

This local community is served by a variety of radio formats that appear to target a number of different audience interests. The list of formats is much the same as other medium to large markets. During the time this study was conducted, the format mix included three News/Talk type stations, two Classic Rock stations (oldies with a little "harder" edge mainly from the 70s and early 80s,) one Oldies station (popular hits from the 50s and 60s,) one Middle of the Road station playing Frank Sinatra - Tony Bennett - and Johnny Mathis type music, one Alternative Rock station (new music with its recent roots in the angry lyrics and tone of the British Punk bands of the early 80s,) one Eclectic Rock station (a mixture of more obscure new music and album cuts mainly from the 80s,) one Lite Rock station playing softer hits from the past twenty years, two Country, one Adult Contemporary (consisting mainly of pop songs from the last ten years,) one Contemporary Hit Radio playing current hits that teenagers enjoy (previously known as Top 40,) and two Public Broadcasting stations. The list seems quite diverse, and representative of most of the different formats in existence elsewhere.

The questions asked of the general managers were very similar to the ones posed to the advertising executives, with the main purpose being to determine how many different types of people are being targeted by the group of radio stations in the market. Here are the five basic questions that were asked of the GMs:

1. Demographically, how would you describe your target audience? Do you have an ideal listener-type?
2. Why do you target this audience?
3. What does your audience want and need from your station?
4. How do you determine your audience's wants and needs?
5. What is the audience demographic that most stations would like to serve?

As expected, the general managers' answers were very similar to the advertising agency executives' responses. Because all radio stations - other than the public broadcasting operations - support themselves solely by providing advertising, it is understandable that the radio managers might conceptualize their target audiences the same way that advertisers perceive their target consumers. So it was in this study.

Table 2 summarizes the managers' responses. Because each manager was guaranteed confidentiality, the stations are identified by letter. In answering the first question, the public radio stations and a few commercial AM stations identified their target audiences as being adults over the age of thirty-five. However, the remainder of the stations generally described their targets according to the broad demographics of the Arbitron company; as did the advertisers. It is also meaningful to compare the similarities in the characteristics the managers used to describe their target audiences, with the characteristics the advertisers used to describe their ideal consumers in Table 1. The manager of Station H said, "We shoot for an upscale audience, an active audience." He described the people who attended one of his station's promotional events as his ideal listener.

> A thousand of em women, and all (station) fanatics. And if you come to that thing you see that ideal listener that you're talking about a thousand times over. And she's typically low to mid 30s, working person leaning more to the professional as opposed to the clerical. . .
> We want to get so many ratings points among 25-54 because that's what the client wants - that's his target audience. . . the fact is most advertising buys are placed 25-54. And that's why most of the stations in town are targeting 25-54, or some cell within that range.

Similarly, here are comments from two other managers explaining the similarity of target groups.

> You have people from their late twenties to late thirties who are consumed with raising their family, buying a home, maybe a second home, two cars and all the things that go with that. Those people are a great consumer group to be reaching. Maybe they don't have as much discretionary income, but their income is going to a lot of big dollar items and frequent purchases. (Station F manager)

> The bulk of the advertising dollars are 25-54, and you've gotta perform well there in order to survive. (Station M manager)

When asked why listeners are not conceptualized in ways outside of this singular audience-type, specifically those individuals older than their mid forties, the responses again correspond to those of the advertisers for the same question. Station J's GM answered, "I think to challenge in that demo you have to provide features that are going to be expensive to get, aka a big news department." Station B's manager was slightly more colorful in his response, "Broadcasting is the last area of legal discrimination. They (advertisers) think that if you're past fifty-five, you're dead. We would probably go broke (if they had to focus on an older demographic)."

The FCC anticipated that specialized audiences would be different from each other. However, according to these interviews, this apparently has not happened. To the contrary, most of the broadcasters seemed to be competing for the same individuals. The broadcasters and advertisers did describe specific audience/consumer types; but each description was the same. This does not seem to be the diversity anticipated in 1981. And this lack of diversity is not lost on at least one of the general managers.

> The (local) market is becoming more like a lot of the other large markets. . . with the haves and the have-nots, you know. It's a very difficult market if you're not in the top three or four radio stations, particularly in this 25-54. And of course everybody wants to program 35-44. . . The unfortunate part about it is. . . there's not enough money there for all of us. There's going to have to be some people break out of the mold. (Station N manager)

Broadcasters' concerns about profitability aside, the answer to the question of how well the local public interest is served through the conceptualization of audiences as a function of age groups, became clearer with analysis of listener responses to the mail survey.

Mail Survey

Of the original 650 names selected for the survey, only 625 were legitimate potential respondents. Three-hundred-sixty-two usable surveys were returned for a response rate of 58%.

The survey was used to test three models; each comparing the relationships between the group of radio formats in the market, and the respondents' perceptions of what those formats were accomplishing. The first model is the Normative Preferences Model, which measured opinions of how target audiences should be programmed to by radio stations. Questions were asked such as "Do you feel that the group of radio formats should reflect the ethnic diversity of a community?" and "Do you feel the group of radio formats should reflect the age diversity of a community?" Similar questions covered the areas of religiosity, gender interests, and sexual preference interests. The goal of the Normative Model was to determine the degree the respondents felt different community groups were entitled to representation in the mix of formats.

The second model - the Performance Model - where the listeners rated the extent that the current mix of formats did indeed represent, or reflect, the specific characteristics of the community, consisted of the question, "Generally speaking, do you feel the collection of local radio formats reflects the different groups of people living in the community?" So, while the Normative Preferences Model rated the extent to which the respondents felt radio formats should reflect the community, the Performance Model measured how well the listeners believed the formats were, in actuality, reflecting the types of people living in the area.

The third model is the Personal Satisfaction Model, and consisted of the single question, "Generally speaking, how well does the group of radio formats in (town) satisfy your personal needs and expectations?" This question was designed to measure the respondents' personal satisfaction with the format selection, regardless of how they perceived the services to other groups of people.

These three models - Normative Preferences, Performance, and Personal Satisfaction - served as the study's primary dependent variables. Numerous independent variables were tested against the dependent variable models, including age groups, community attachment, attitudes on diversity, and perceptions of advertisers.

Dependent Variable Index Construction

The Normative Model

Of the three dependent variable models, the Normative Model involved the creation of indices from more than one question. The Performance and Personal Satisfaction models each were measured by one item.

Table 3 shows the results from the Factor Analysis and Reliability tests for the six Normative Model items. Each of the items measured the extent the respondents believed different community groups should be represented in the format mix. One question asked for their opinions in a general sense; the others dealt with specific community groups. The factor analysis indicated that one factor was being measured by all six items. The Standardized Item Alpha of .88 (on a scale from 0 to 1.0) denotes a strong relationship in the combination of these items for measuring the normative preferences of the respondents.

The Baseline Model

Table 4 displays the baseline model used to evaluate the correlations between the three dependent variable models and numerous other independent variables. This chart shows the zero order regression coefficients for the different variables. Generally, Table 4 shows that age, education, and income had limited influence on the respondents' evaluations. It is particularly relevant that age played no part in the critiques - especially the Personal Satisfaction Model - because the local general managers and advertisers were age-oriented in their audience conceptualizations.

From looking at Table 4 one also can readily see that items described as Diversity factors are significant in predicting each of the three dependent variable models at the .01 significance level, and seem to be the most consistent and powerful predictors of any index, or single variable, in the survey.

Essentially, the diversity factors were derived from a series of questions designed to measure attitudes toward individuals perceived as being different from oneself. The responses tended to cluster into three groups: Comfort - the degree to which one is at ease around different types of people, Decision Making - the extent one believes different types of people should be included in decision-making processes, and Friends - the willingness to develop personal relationships with different kinds of people. At least one element of Diversity is a strong predictor for each of the Normative, Performance, and Personal Satisfaction models.

Regarding the other less consistent predictor variables, Race had an influence in evaluating how well the formats reflect local diversity, but was surprisingly insignificant in predicting personal satisfaction. Gender was significant in predicting normative responses (the -.26 indicates a female orientation), with women having higher expectations than men.

Of the factors that measured the respondents' sense of community, feeling "a part of" the area was an important element in determining the extent that one is personally satisfied with the format choices. But, individuals who regularly converse with others about current events ("Connecting"), tended to have higher Normative Preferences of what the medium should be providing for the community.

Religiosity, as measured by church attendance, played a significant role in predicting Personal Satisfaction. This item asked respondents if they attend religious services. (The table also shows that "frequency of attendance" at these services was not a significant factor.) The -.17 value under Church Attendance indicates that attendees generally express less personal satisfaction than people who do not attend religious services. Perhaps religious messages referring to society's moral dilemma resonate with how one might interpret various elements of radio programming. However, this is only conjecture and is not measured by data in this study.

Finally, the amount of time spent watching television is a contributing factor in predicting responses to personal satisfaction criteria. According to the data, the more time one spends watching television the more one is likely to be personally satisfied with the radio format mix.

The Age Component

Perhaps the most ironic finding of the study regards the function of age groups, because advertising agencies and radio station management conceptualized audiences primarily according to age considerations. This system, even with its acknowledged limitations, appears to be the most familiar and workable to the marketplace and industry. With the current system of conceptualizing audiences, advertisers are able to identify their target consumers according to age guidelines that have historically proven to be profitable. Station management, while occasionally cursing the ratings based system used to rank stations, nevertheless continues to conceptualize its audiences according to these same age-based guidelines, so as to present a case for their stations as strong advertising vehicles.

With all of the emphasis on age as a prime component in understanding audiences, one might presume some aspect of age would help predict the answers to the survey questions. In reality, just the opposite proved to be the case. Regardless of how age groups were delineated in the data analysis, they proved to have no significance and very small coefficient values in all tests. In other words, when asking the questions posed in the Normative Preferences, Performance, and Personal Satisfaction models, age was never a factor in determining the answers. Even in the Personal Satisfaction model, where individuals rated their own personal happiness with the format selection, age was not a factor.

Table 5 displays the results of the zero-order correlations of four different configurations of age demographics, on the three dependent variable models. The first configuration is a straight test of age as a variable, without organizing it into specific demographic groups. However, the other three configurations arrange age according to the popular demographic groupings described by advertisers and radio management during the personal interviews.

For example, the second configuration - Ideal - is based on a description of the "ideal" consumer/listener as being an individual between the ages of twenty-seven and forty. The age cells in this configuration, both younger and older, were formed proportionally around this primary twenty-seven to forty year old group.

The demographic description of audiences offered most often in the interviews was individuals aged twenty-five to fifty-four. This is the large group of people targeted en masse by almost every radio station and advertiser. Therefore, this age range formed the central demographic group of the third configuration.

The fourth configuration also resulted from descriptions of the target audience offered in the interviews. When asked to describe a demographic more specific than 25-54, the programmers acknowledged that 35-44 was really the age group, conceptualized by Arbitron, within which most stations would like to rate well.

So, to summarize how the age demographics for this analysis were arrived at, configurations three and four were based on the most popular Arbitron demographic conceptualizations, and the second configuration was determined by what the advertisers and managers described in the personal interviews as the "ideal" consumer/listener.

In looking at Table 5, the coefficients for each of the correlations of the dependent variables are insignificant, most of them not even close to significance. Therefore, from these data, one might conclude that age - regardless of how it is demographically organized - was not a factor in determining how individuals evaluated the performance of the local radio stations. Tables 6 - 8 provide more detail into the lack of age significance, by highlighting the "sameness" of answers for each age group.

Table 6 displays the frequencies and statistics for each of the three dependent variables according to the demographics determined by the "ideal" listener-type of twenty-seven to forty year olds. One will notice that the answers to each question were very similar, regardless of age group. (The Normative and Personal Satisfaction models were constructed on a scale from one to ten, ten being high.)

Table 7 tabulated the answers to the same questions, for the age groups resulting from the popular Arbitron 25-54 age break-out. Table 8 did likewise for the age groups based on the Arbitron category of 35-44 year olds. In each case, the answers to the questions were essentially the same, regardless of how the age groups were organized. Therefore, the practice of conceptualizing audiences by age group is limiting, in this market, in terms of identifying how one evaluates and uses radio. Most listeners - regardless of age - were basically personally satisfied with the format choices, but believed the local formats were not reflective of the types of people who live in the community.

So, while advertisers and radio station programmers essentially identified target audiences by age demographics, this conceptualization may be virtually meaningless in predicting how listeners regard the medium, and rate their personal satisfaction with it. In general, results from the mail survey indicated that standard demographic conceptualizations of audiences have limited application in predicting how listeners evaluate radio formats, or how they rate personal satisfaction with programming. Age groups were virtually meaningless as predictors. Rather, other audience characteristics such as gender, race, sense of community, and attitudes about diversity were more reliable in influencing how respondents evaluated the format mix.

Discussion

It has been suggested that one of the reasons the academy has been slow to respond to deregulatory/marketplace shortcomings is the lack of an easily understood frame from which to explain and communicate. (16) Information such as that provided in this study may serve as a starting point for such a frame.

Because advertisers want to reach as many people as they can within a demographic description, radio stations tailor programming to attract that particular target. However, as has been shown, advertisers are not targeting diverse audience groups, but rather tend to focus on similar age demographics. And, the few demographics that are being used are ineffective in predicting audience satisfaction. In other words, empirical evidence may be emerging that indicates - in the current scheme - audience the marketplace claims to serve most effectively may be misunderstood.

According to the data, regardless of how age is categorized in the industry, grouping the respondents in these ways is virtually meaningless for gaining understanding into how audiences perceive radio programming. These findings seem to support those already presented by individuals such as Dallas Smythe, who argued that the mass media audience is not a true "market" in the economic sense (18), and Donald Hurwitz, who stated that ratings systems serve the agendas of those who design them. (19) Ien Ang described the current age-based ratings descriptions as, "abstracted, amplified fictions." (20) Perhaps this study adds a chapter to those conclusions by showing that there is quantitative evidence that in one representative market the conceptualization of audiences as a function of age-based demographics may not have adequately served the public interest.

NOTES

1. Federal Communications Commission, "Report and Order In the Matter of Deregulation of Radio," 49 FCC 2d (1981).

2. Ibid., 1023.

3. Ibid., 1024.

4. Ibid., 974.

5. David Robinson, "A Buyer's Eye View of Rehashed Radio," Mediaweek (Sept. 9, 1991): 30, recalled how it was noticed that five Baltimore radio stations were playing the same song at the exact same time. The song hadn't been on the charts for years.

6. Harvey C. Jassem and Roger J. Desmond, "Pluralistic Programming and Radio Diversity: a Review and a Proposal," Policy Sciences 14 (1982): 355.

7. Eileen R. Meehan, "Why We Don't Count," in Logics of Television, ed. Patricia Mellencamp (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 127.

8. Dallas W. Smythe, "Radio: Deregulation and the Relation of the Private and Public Sectors," Journal of Communication (Winter 1982): 197.

9. James G. Webster, "The Role of Audience Ratings in Communications Policy," Communications and the Law (June 1990): 59.

10. Donald Hurwitz, "Broadcast Ratings: The Missing Dimension," Critical Studies in Mass Communication (June 1984): 207.

11. Ibid., 208.

12. Robert W. McChesney, Telecommunications, Mass Media, and Democracy: The Battle for the Control of U.S. Broadcasting, 1928-1935 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

13. Two of the radio station managers were not interviewed in this time period because they had been personally interviewed a year earlier in a pilot project for this study. It was felt that because their stations' formats were unchanged, and they had provided the needed information in the previous interview, further contact was not necessary at this time.

14. Keith Stamm, Newspaper Use and Community Ties (Norwood, New Jersey: Ablex Publishing Corporation, 1985) and Jack M. McLeod et. al., Community Integration, Local Media Use and Democratic Processes, Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Atlanta, Georgia, August, 1994. Both of these studies provided explications of community identification that were used in this project.

15. Ibid. at 3.

16. Duncan H. Brown, "The Academy's Response to the Call for a Marketplace Approach to Broadcast Regulation," Critical Studies in Mass Communication 11 (1994): 257-273.

17. Ibid. at 1, 1033.

18. Ibid. at 8.

19. Ibid. at 10.

20. Ien Ang, Desperately Seeking the Audience (London: Routledge, 1991), 160.

Table 1. - - Advertising Agency Target Group and Ideal Consumer Typologies

Agency	Target Group	Ideal Consumer
A		37 year old female, college degree, two cars, two kids, suburbanite
B	25-45	35-44 years old, sophisticated, eager, bright, not contented
C	30-44	"elite", value-conscious, family person
D	30-45	white collar, one or two children
E	25-49	female, two children

Table 2. - - Radio Station Target Audiences and Ideal Listener Typologies

Station	Format	Target Audience	Ideal Listener
A	News & Infor.	35+	40 year old, male, upper income
B	Classic Rock	25-40	Family person
C	MOR	35+	
D	Alternative Rock	18-34	Female, late 20s professional
E	Lite Rock	25-49	Female
F	Country	18+	
G	News/Talk	25-54	Male
H	Adult Contemporary	25-54	Female, early 30s, professional
I	Classic Rock	25-54	Male, mid 30s, professional
J	Eclectic	25-34	Male, 32 years old, upscale, married, no children, two-incomes
K	Country	25-44	Female, 27 years old, upscale, has children
L	News/Talk	25-54	Male, 40 years old

Table 2. - - Radio Station Target Audiences and Ideal Listener Typology (cont.)

Station	Format	Target Audience	Ideal Listener
M	Contemporary Hit Radio	18-39	Female, 27 years old, educated, two-income household, children
N	Oldies	35-44	Two-income family, busy lifestyles, involved in the community
O P	Public	30+ educated	educated, child-centered, involved in the community, low to medium income

Table 3. - - Factor Loadings and Corrected Item-Total Correlations of Normative Preferences Index

First-order factors and items	Standardized Item Alpha	Corrected Item-tot. Corr.	Mean	S.D.
	.88			
Generally speaking, do you feel that the collection of radio formats in a town should be representative of the different groups of people who live there?		.74	7.42	2.11
More specifically, do you feel that the group of radio formats should reflect the:				
ethnic diversity of a community?		.79	6.99	2.26
age diversity of a community?		.77	7.45	2.12
gender diversity of a community?		.66	6.42	2.51
religious diversity of a community?		.60	5.70	2.50
sexual preference diversity of a community?		.57	4.92	2.85

Table 4. - - Zero-order Associations with the Dependent Variable Models

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables		
	Norm.	Perf.	Personal Satis.
Diversity Factors			
Comfort	.18**	.01	.21**
Decision-Making	.28**	-.14**	.09
Friends	.19**	-.14**	.04
Gender	-.26**	.02	.01
Community:			
"a part of"	.10	.00	.23**
Connecting	.12*	-.08	.09
Public Radio	.11*	.09	-.16**
Religiosity:			
attends church	.08	.00	-.17**
frequency of attendance	-.02	-.12	-.03
Race	.01	.13*	-.02
Use of other media:			
Time spent watching TV	.00	.06	.11*
Time spent reading newspapers	.02	.03	.00
Education	.10	-.05	-.04
Income	-.09	-.05	.09
Age	-.06	.06	.07

* $p \leq .05$ ** $p \leq .01$

Table 5. - - Zero-order Correlations by Age Groups

Age Group Demographics		Normative Prefs.	Perf.	Pers. Sat.
Age (continuous)		-.06	.06	.07
Ideal (27-40)	lo-26 27-40 41-55 56-hi	-.04	.03	.05
Target (25-54)	lo-24 25-54 55-hi	-.09	.02	.04
Target (35-44)	lo-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-hi	-.04	.05	.08

Table 6. - - Dependent Variable Models by Ideal Listener Demographic

	Frequency	Percent
26 & under	29	8
27-40 (target)	144	40
41-55	137	38
56 & older	41	11
missing	11	3

Normative Model - "Should formats be representative?"

	Mean
26 & under	7.87
27-40 (target)	7.39
41-55	7.56
56 & older	7.12

Performance Model - "Does (local) Radio Reflect Groups?"

	Under reflects	Reflects	Over reflects	D.K.
26 & under	45%	35%		21%
27-40 (target)	38%	39%	2%	19%
41-55	41%	29%	2%	27%
56 & older	39%	37%	5%	20%

Personal Satisfaction Model - "Are you personally satisfied?"

	Mean
26 & under	7.03
27-40 (target)	7.26
41-55	7.57
56 & older	7.30

Table 7. - - Dependent Variable Models by 25-54 Arbitron Demographic

	Frequency	Percent
24 & under	15	4.1
25-54 (target)	286	79.0
55 & older	50	13.8
missing	11	3.0

Normative Model - "Should formats be representative?"

	Mean
24 & under	8.27
25-54 (target)	7.50
55 & older	7.00

Performance Model - "Does (local) Radio Reflect Groups?"

	Under reflects	Reflects	Over reflects	D.K.
24 & under	53.3%	26.7%		20.0%
25-54 (target)	39.7%	35.5%	1.8%	23.0%
55 & older	40.0%	34.0%	4.0%	22.0%

Personal Satisfaction Model - "Are you personally satisfied?"

	Mean
24 & under	6.53
25-54 (target)	7.41
55 & older	7.37

Table 8. - - Dependent Variable Models by 35-44 Arbitron Demographic

	Frequency	Percent
24 & under	15	4.1
25-34	76	21.0
35-44 (target)	129	35.6
45-54	81	22.4
55 & older	50	13.8
missing	11	3.0

Normative Model - "Should formats be representative?"

	Mean
24 & under	8.27
25-34	7.39
35-44 (target)	7.34
45-54	7.87
55 & older	7.00

Performance Model - "Does (local) Radio Reflect Groups?"

	Under reflects	Reflects	Over reflects	D.K.
24 & under	53%	27%		20%
25-34	44%	33%	1%	21%
35-44 (target)	38%	38%	2%	21%
45-54	38%	33%	1%	28%
55 & older	40%	34%	4%	22%

Personal Sat. Model - "Are you personally satisfied?"

	Mean
24 & under	6.53
25-34	7.33
35-44 (target)	7.20
45-54	7.83
55 & older	7.37

The Thomas/Hill confrontation makes it to the cartoon page:

A content analysis of political cartoons.

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The Thomas/Hill confrontation makes it to the cartoon page: A content analysis of political cartoons.

Abstract

Political cartoons about the Thomas/Hill confrontation were of the humorous rather than poignant variety. Taking a social construction/social action perspective, this study, a content analysis of political cartoons, explicates the contributions of these cartoons that often addressed issues off limits to other media. While this issue concerned sexual harassment, racism, and sexism, the cartoonists drew this mostly as an issue of a powerless public beholden to a poorly run government.

The Thomas/Hill confrontation makes it to the cartoon page:

A content analysis of political cartoons.

Introduction

The Clarence Thomas/Anita Hill hearing kept many Americans glued to their television sets for the duration of Congressional debate. The overall outcome was positive for both main characters involved. Thomas sits on the Supreme Court, and Anita Hill sits in an endowed professorship in her name at the University of Oklahoma School of Law. Editorial cartoonists appeared to enjoy the spectacle the most, however, due to the wealth of material it provided.

Usually occupying only a small portion of an editorial page, hidden in the back of the paper, editorial cartoons are still part of a filtering system that helps construct social reality. Editorial cartoonists give meaning to 'facts' as they artistically help construct the social reality responded to by those who pay attention to editorial cartoons. As Boulding (1956) argues, "for any individual organism or organization, there are no such things as 'facts.' There are only messages filtered through a changeable value system" (p. 14). Further, Edelman (1988) argues that media in general help "construct the social reality to which people respond" (p. 34). According to Anderson and Meyer (1988), "Meaning is not delivered in the communication process, rather it is constructed in it" (p. 47). Further, "Meanings arise in the intentions of the producer, in the conventions of the content, and in the interpretations of the receiver" (p. 48). Viewing editorial cartoons from a social construction, or a 'social action' theoretical perspective as Anderson and Meyer (1988) term it, allows one to investigate, describe, and understand the social reality that editorial cartoons help construct. Political cartoonists are social judges interpreting the news.

Their drawings are a form of journalistic commentary designed to influence viewers with regard to events of the day. People often want a simple interpretation, and cartoonists can fulfill this role. Political cartoons can insinuate subtle cues and hints, and thus sometimes say what others dare not. Humor, albeit often dark humor, concerning a serious issue, helps alleviate the painful truth of a situation. The political cartoon is a significant form of political and social communication (Harrison, 1981; Press, 1981; Reeves, 1991).

Research on political cartoons has generally focused on well-remembered images of presidents, presidential candidates, and other leaders (DeSousa, 1984; DeSousa & Medhurst, 1982; Grofman, 1989; Hill, 1978; Medhurst and Desousa, 1981; Morrison, 1969). Only a few studies have focused on women cartoonists or the portrayal of women in editorial cartoons (Caswell, 1988; Fischer, 1986; Myer et. al., 1980). This research generally supports the notion that women are under-represented and stereotypically presented in editorial cartoons. Chavez (1985) investigated comic strips as opposed to editorial cartoons, and found that women are under-represented in the comics. The authors are only aware of one article that investigated the portrayal of African-Americans in a one-panel cartoon. Thibodeau (1989) finds that the portrayal of African-Americans has evolved from a racist, stereotypical one to a non-existent or token portrayal. Previous study of political cartoons has not considered women, minorities, and government officials when portrayed in the same frame. This study, a content analysis of the political cartoons of the Thomas/Hill confrontation, explicates the contributions of the cartoons--caricatures that are often able to address issues off limits to other media. With a sensitive subject such as sexual harassment, the cartoon is able to portray the difficult and extensive problem simplistically, often cutting to the 'quick' (Harrison, 1981). "A few deft lines, a word or two, and a little drawing...can be worth more than a thousand words or a thousand pages of analysis in the New York Times, or Le Monde, or Pravda" (Reeves, 1991, p. xi). The humor in political cartoons played a unique role during the Thomas/Hill confrontation. Several research questions guided our analysis of the cartoons.

Research Questions

The social action perspective and previous studies of political cartoons lead to a number of research questions concerning what view of the social and political landscape is constructed in these cartoons. Research question number one asks about the portrayal of different groups in the cartoons:

RQ1: How do the cartoons portray: (a) African-Americans?; (b) Women?; (c) Congress?; (d) Media?; (e) Public?; (f) Confirmation hearings?; (g) Republicans?; (h) Democrats?

Research question number two asks about the portrayal of individuals in the cartoons:

RQ2: How do the cartoons portray: (a) Thomas?; (b) Hill?; (c) President Bush?

Research questions numbers three, four, and five ask about possessing, gaining, or losing power and prestige:

RQ3: Which actor(s) is (are) portrayed as having the most power?

RQ4: Which actor(s) is (are) portrayed as having the most to lose?

RQ5: Which actor(s) is (are) portrayed as having the most to gain?

The next two research questions address the principal actors in the confrontation:

RQ6: Is Clarence Thomas portrayed as innocent or guilty?

RQ7: Is Anita Hill portrayed as truthful or untruthful?

The final research question refers to the outcome of the hearings:

RQ8: Do the cartoons portray justice as being served?

Method

Content analysis of the political cartoon can isolate, identify, and describe the ideologies and propagandas offered in symbolic representation (Krippendorf, 1980; Laswell & Leites, 1965). Content analysis of the political cartoons of the Thomas/Hill confrontation allows for a better understanding of the contributions to the confrontation that the cartoons make and the reality they construct.

Content analysis was used to determine how specific characters were portrayed in political cartoons concerning the Thomas/Hill confrontation. The unit of analysis was the entire cartoon. Cartoons appearing in The National Gallery of Cartoons and The Washington Post Weekly Edition for October and November, 1991 were analyzed. By using syndicated cartoons from across the country, both publications provide a broad sample of differing views from many cartoonists.

A pilot study was conducted using fifty undergraduates in a communication class at a large southwestern University to assist in developing and refining the code sheet.[1] For the study presented in this paper, coders were 6 adults, 3 male and 3 female from various regions of the country. All coders expressed an interest in and general knowledge of politics. Coders were at least over the age of 25 and had voted in all state and national elections for which they were eligible. Coders evaluated all cartoons in the sample and were asked to complete a comprehensive coding sheet for each cartoon. Coders were asked to code the cartoons in terms of whether the actors or groups involved in the conflict are portrayed positively or negatively. Coders were also asked to mark which actor or group lost or gained the most in terms of money, power and position, and whether Thomas or Hill was guilty or innocent/truthful or untruthful. Finally, coders were asked to judge whether the cartoon indicated justice had been served in the Thomas/Hill spectacle. Intercoder reliability was calculated on 10% of the sample. Intercoder reliability was 77.18.[2] Intercoder reliability was low but was deemed acceptable. The volatile nature of the topic considered in the cartoons, and the difficulty of making judgements about the cartoons perhaps explains the low intercoder reliability. Differences in the gender of the coders may account for the variation as well, although the answer to the question is beyond the scope of this study. Male coders did report though, in an open-ended question about their feelings on the issue, that the issue was "old news" many months after the completion of the hearings, while female coders continued to view the issue as significant.

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[1] The pilot study proved helpful for refining the code book and code sheet, although intercoder reliability was very low. The low reliability may have been the result of the coders lack of knowledge and political acumen which could deter interpretation (Desousa & Medhurst, 1982).

Results

Results are summarized in Table 1 and Table 2. All general groups coded were portrayed negatively by the cartoons (RQ1). Inquiry about negative portrayal proved moderate for the general categories of gender and ethnicity. Women were portrayed positively 48.16% of the time in the cartoons. At 74.25% negative portrayal, African Americans were still less negatively portrayed than many of the other characters. Congress was portrayed negatively by 91.64% of the cartoons while the media and the public had moderately negative portrayals, both ranging around 60%. The strongest negative portrayal was the confirmation hearings themselves with 92.98% negative portrayal. Democrats and Republicans (86.62% and 89.23% negative portrayal, respectively) shared an equal negative portrayal although the Democrats did come out slightly more positive than Republicans.

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[2] According to Krippendorff (1980), intercoder reliability can be obtained by dividing the total number of responses possible by the number agreed upon by the coders.

For the specific individuals, negative portrayal proved moderate for Thomas and Hill (RQ2). Thomas was portrayed negatively 76.59% of the time. The only specific character that was portrayed more positively than negatively was Hill with a 52.84% positive portrayal rate. Bush, on the other hand, was portrayed negatively 85.95% of the time.

Insert Table 1 about here

Bush came out ahead as the individual with the most power. He was portrayed as having great power in 51.51% of the cartoons. The media and Congress were depicted as having power in 21.2% and 13.1% of the cartoons respectively. Although the Public was not the lowest group in terms of power (14.3%), they were very low in comparison to others such as Bush and the Media. The group that stood to lose the most was the Public. Women, at 19.73%, and Bush, at 17.39%, were also portrayed as actors having much to lose. Bush was portrayed 26.33% of the time as the individual who stood to gain the most. Thomas, at 21.33% and Congress, at 11.66%, followed respectively second and third as actors portrayed as having the most to gain. Hill was not portrayed as having much to gain or lose, nor was she portrayed as powerful (RQ 4,5,6).

Insert Table 2 about here

Thomas was portrayed as guilty 44.33% of the time and innocent 29.33% of the time. In 26.33% of the portrayals, Thomas was portrayed as neither guilty nor innocent. Hill was portrayed as truthful 53.66%, untruthful 36.66% and neither 9.66% of the time (RQ 6,7).

According to the cartoons, justice was portrayed as being served in only 8.11% of the cartoons (RQ8).

Discussion

Political cartoons are generally a negative medium (Streicher, 1967; Thorkelson, 1979). It is no surprise then, that most every person or group is portrayed in a highly negative manner. However, the significance of negative/stereotyped portrayals within the cartoon is that these are artistic/editorialized views of certain categories of people that help in constructing the reality to which readers of the cartoons create.

Government Portrayal

The cartoonists point to a seeming paradox apparent in our government during the Thomas/Hill confrontation. We, the voters, have given Congress control, yet these artistic pundits portray Congress as unable and unwilling to control the confirmation hearings. Congress is portrayed as having the most power, yet it is also the group portrayed most often as politically bumbling. The confirmation hearings themselves were portrayed very negatively in the cartoons as well.

The individuals and groups representing the government in these cartoons (Bush, Democrats and Republicans) have high frequencies of negative portrayal. Bush is placed in the optimum position in the cartoons, having the most power, the most to gain, and the least to lose. Interestingly, the media, the forum for distributing this message, are portrayed as having nothing to lose, much to gain, and much power.

The government is often thought of as the purveyor of justice, however, 91.89% of the time the cartoonists portrayed justice as not being served in this major issue. The elected officials have the power, and at least in the logic of these cartoons, power outweighs justice. The political cartoon criticizes and stereotypes the government first. Second, it paints a picture of what government 'is,' subtly suggesting that justice not being served is inherent in government.

Anita Hill and Women

The only individual that is portrayed more often positive than negative is Hill. No group is portrayed in this manner, although women are close. Such a portrayal might serve to lift Anita Hill to role model status. The women's experience appears more closely linked with Hill since both portrayal percentages are similar, ranging around 50%. Hill did not stand to gain or lose much, but she also was not portrayed as having much in terms of power either. Hill is portrayed as basically powerless although women, in general, are not. Although cartoonists see women as powerful (second only to Bush in the cartoons in this sample), they portrayed a specific woman embroiled in a controversial issue as having little power.

The comic strip research on women might help answer the question as to why women are portrayed as powerful in general yet Hill, specifically, is not. There are evolving stereotypes concerning gender in cartoons. Women appear more often in cartoons and stereotypes have changed (Brabant & Mooney, 1968; Chavez, 1985; Meyer, Seidler, Curry & Aveni, 1986). The traditional stereotype portrayed women as matronly or glamourous. Meyer, et al. (1986) show a more realistic portrayal of women in recent years, yet there is still subtle subordination. But, Hill is more positively and realistically portrayed. If Hill is used as an indicator, the role of women, as portrayed in cartoons, has expanded to include a truthful yet powerless and somewhat subordinated individual. The general image of women has changed though, as women are now portrayed as having political power. Overall, women seem to be in a better position in cartoons. Hill's race must certainly have played a part in how editorial cartoonists chose to portray her, probably influencing her portrayal as powerless.

Clarence Thomas and African Americans

Clarence Thomas' nomination to the Supreme Court was at stake. Although the confirmation hearings never declared guilt or innocence, the fact that Thomas now sits on the Supreme Court seems to indicate that Congress found him innocent. In the cartoons, however, he was found guilty. Thomas is characterized as a bumbling individual, both politically and socially. The portrayal of African-Americans as a group seems more closely linked with Thomas in these cartoons. The percentage of negativity of African Americans and of Thomas are almost equal. Both are moderate for this sample, yet 76.59% is still a high negative portrayal. The same holds true when we look at who has the most to lose.

Research concerning comic strips and ethnicity suggests that African-Americans are portrayed more frequently and in a more positive light than in the past. Negative stereotypes, however, are still used (Thibodeau, 1989). Studying cartoons from 1946 through 1987, Thibodeau (1989), found changing stereotypes from one of inferior status in the early years, to race related social status, to athletes, and more recently, tokens. Our findings also appear to support the changing of African-Americans portrayal in cartoons from subordinate roles to token roles. Some mediums, particularly political cartoons, appear more sensitive to stereotypes. Thibodeau argues that "humor must be handled judiciously," as it "can cut both ways." "The dilemma: because norms regarding what in fact constitutes racism (particularly on a subtle level) may not be altogether clear...[cartoonists] stereotype...and, thus, may find themselves open to charges of racism" (Thibodeau, 1989, p. 482). For example, one cartoon in the sample portrayed Bush as a plantation owner and Thomas as his servant. Many saw this as racially insensitive, while others saw it as a humorous indictment of Bush.

The Public

The public lost little, gained little and wielded very little power. The political media affair is portrayed as an event which we, the public, live vicariously through the soap opera drama that glued many to their television or radio for an entire fall weekend in 1991. Although the public gained little politically from the experience, comments made by different coders in the open-ended question on the coding sheet that asked for individual opinion about this issue suggest it may have proved cathartic. Simply put, the public, according to the cartoonists, did not make a significant difference in this political debate.

Conclusion

While this issue concerned sexual harassment, racism, and sexism the political cartoonists drew this first as an issue of a poorly run government. By cutting to the quick of the poor handling of a sensitive issue, these blunders appear natural and normal to the process of running the federal government. The issue of guilt or innocence, truth or lie still remains unsettled. Major works supporting both sides have been written (Brock, 1993; Chrisman & Allen, 1992; Morrison, 1992). In the cartoons though, bad government transcends

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guilt or innocence. Individuals and groups that are portrayed as powerful get what they want, even though they are also portrayed as inept. In the remote universe of the political cartoon, with its negative portrayal of the Thomas/Hill confrontation, our options are limited to viewing the issue as either sexual harassment or perjury under the guidance of an inept congress. We are encouraged to laugh at a situation that we seemingly cannot change because we the public have little to gain or lose and little power to affect change.

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Table 1

	Positively	Negatively
Group One/General Groups		
Women	48.16%	51.84%
Public	40.13%	59.87%
Media	39.46%	60.54%
African Americans	25.75%	74.25%
Congress in general	8.36%	91.64%
Confirmation Hearings	7.02%	92.98%
Democrats	13.04%	86.62%
Republicans	10.77%	89.23%
Group Two/Specific Characters		
Hill	52.84%	47.16%
Thomas	23.41%	76.59%
Bush	14.05%	85.95%

Table 2
(Listed in percentages)

	Thomas	Hill	Bush	Congress	Women	Afr.Am.	Media	Public
Lose	11.34	3.34	17.30	91.01	9.73	11.37	35.7	8.00
Gain	21.30	34.66	26.33	11.66	6.30	34.33	20.0	5.30
Power	5.30	8.33	51.51	13.10	31.68	2.35	21.2	14.30

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Business as Usual: Myth and Mobility in Hollywood Business Films

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Business as Usual: Myth and Mobility in Hollywood Business Films

Abstract

This study examined the broad narratives in films about business in order to identify social and class mobility patterns. Plot summaries of 114 films about business from 1927 to 1992 were analyzed. Our demographic profile of business people suggests that the majority are white, male, American adults which corroborates previous findings in other media research. Analyses show a tendency for business films to be made only in comedy or drama genres. Further, manufacturing and non-financial services were the most frequently represented types of business. A relatively even distribution of business films over time was found except for an abundance during the years of the Great Depression (1930-1939). Similarly, the myth of the American Dream was overwhelmingly present throughout, particularly in the Depression years. Findings also indicate ambition, hard work, risk, and sacrifice to be the most prevalent keys to success in business and a discernible pattern of overall upward class migration was identified. Methodological limitations and suggestions for further research are also discussed.

This study investigates how social mobility is represented in Hollywood sound films about business. More specifically, we content analyzed film plot summaries to examine the mythology of social mobility in these film narratives. Business is defined here as a "profit-seeking enterprise" such as companies, corporations and factories but excludes those smaller family businesses (corner stores, restaurants, etc.) and illegitimate commercial ventures (Random House, 1968). Professions such as law, medicine, academics, and architecture are also excluded, for as Greisman(1976) argues, these professionals differentiate themselves from businessmen and women, often elevating their practices to a "higher plane than the entrepreneur or executive" (p. 73).

Our contribution to the body of knowledge on mass media portrayals of social mobility is threefold. First, while the majority of research on this topic focuses on television, this study addresses social mobility in film and is one of the few to do so empirically. Second, this study traces the portrayal of social mobility from the inception of Hollywood sound film in 1927 to 1992. In this sense, our research adds an important historical dimension which reveals pattern portrayals of social mobility over time. Finally, we move beyond merely noting social mobility patterns and identify specific elements which contribute to character mobility within the films.

Research on media representation of social mobility is scant and tends to focus on television rather than film (Berk, 1977; Butsch, 1992; Freeman, 1992; Gentile & Miller, 1961; Thomas & Callahan, 1982). Berk (1977), Butsch (1992), and Gentile & Miller (1961) found that the working classes are underrepresented on television. However, when portrayed positively, which is rare, working class characters are shown in comic situations. Furthermore, social mobility and success are achieved mainly through a character's individual action (Byers, 1987; Desser, 1981; Freeman, 1992; Giroux, 1990; Lipsitz, 1986; Thomas & Callahan, 1982; Traube, 1992). In addition, studies report that white male professionals are over represented to the detriment of all other demographic/ occupational groups (Defleur, 1964; Leshay, 1992; Seggar & Wheeler, 1973; Steeves & Smith, 1987, Weigel & Loomis, 1981). Moreover, the representation of business people tends to be negative, particularly if the business people are wealthy (Greisman, 1976; Powers, Rothman & Rothman, 1992; Randall, 1987; Rothman & Lichter, 1982; Thomas & Leshay, 1992).

Research reveals that narratives of social mobility and class struggle are mythicized in the media. Two contradictory myths seem to be operating concomitantly in media narratives. While some myths may encourage people to work hard in their quest for upward mobility, others portray the wealthy as unhappy (Berk, 1977; Gray, 1982; Horton, 1989; Levy, 1991; Thomas 1986, 1990). In this sense these myths glorify and extend the promise of upward social mobility; simultaneously, they offer cautionary narratives against upward mobility and console those who do not achieve success.

We will identify the demographic profile of business people, describe and categorize business films in terms of genre, types of business, and their distribution over a 65 year period. More specifically, we will investigate the most prevalent myths in business films, attempt to identify the portrayed keys to success in business, and address the patterns of social and class mobility in film depictions of the business world.

Method

Since the purpose of this study is to investigate the broad narrative structures underlying business films, we analyzed plot summaries rather than the films themselves. A variety of sources were considered. The Motion Picture Guide provided the most comprehensive and detailed account of the film plots used in this analysis. None of the sampled movies are absent from this source. Unlike reviews in Variety Magazine or the New York Times, The Motion Picture Guide accounts do not focus primarily on critical evaluations of films but summarizes the plot. However, in 16 cases The Motion Picture Guide did not provide sufficient information on films. Variety Magazine and the New York Times reviews were used as supplementary sources for coding these films.

Our data source was constrained a priori and exhaustively used for collection and analysis. Films with companies, corporations, or factories central to their plots were extracted from the annual lists of the top 50 grossing feature films during the sound film period 1927 to 1992 . For theoretical and practical purposes, the data frame is arbitrarily limited to the top 50 grossing films of each year. First, these films are the most widely viewed by contemporary audiences and therefore they potentially act as agents of socialization (Levy, 1991). Second, in order to generate a comprehensive list of annual top grossing films for over a period of 65 years, a variety of sources had to be considered. All of these sources do not provide equally comprehensive lists of top grossing films. Focusing on the top 50 films allowed us to consider the same number of films for each year. A list of 3,264 films was generated. All films tying for the annual fiftieth place were included in the population. Rereleases were not counted. Since 1942, with the exception of 1944, 1945, and 1956, annual lists of top grossing films are published in Variety Magazine's Anniversary Edition. Steinberg (1980) provided information about top grossing films for the years (1940, 1941, 1944, 1945, 1956) as well as for the years 1927 through 1929. That Was Hollywood: The 1930s (Eyles, 1987) provided the annual top 50 grossing films for 1930 through 1939. Out of 3,264 films, 114 films fit our definition of a business film. (See Appendix I)

Two units of analysis, the single business film and the individual plot functional character, were used for coding purposes. Plot functional characters are those who receive more than a mere mention in the film review and contribute significantly to the filmic narrative. This definition resulted in a data set of 114 films and 316 characters.

Using the single business film as the first unit of analysis, we addressed broader structural questions about the films. Here, the coding instrument consisted of 22 questions regarding film genre, myths, and general patterns of social mobility. Our second unit of analysis focused on plot functional characters; the coding instrument posed 58 questions about character demographics, keys to success in business, and character development. The validity of categories was improved during two pre-tests. By providing "unknown", "undetermined", "not applicable", and "other" options within the range of choices, the exhaustiveness of categories was improved. To maintain mutual exclusiveness, we included a number of questions where "Yes" and "No" were the only available choices.

Films were randomly assigned to four coders. Each coder analyzed approximately 30 film summaries over a two week period. Ten percent of the population was randomly selected for coder reliability tests. An overall 90 percent agreement among coders across all items was achieved.

Results pertaining to simple categorical counts will be presented in absolute frequencies. Where categorical comparisons are made across historical eras, results will be reported as normalized percentages.

Results and discussion

This study resulted in a number of descriptive insights into the general characteristics of films about the business world and the characters inhabiting this world. For example, it is reasonable to conclude that the Motion Picture Academy does not often grant films about business best picture awards. Only one percent of this study's population received an Academy Award for best picture. Business films tend to be framed in the time period of their release. A mere 17 percent of the coded films were set in past or future periods.

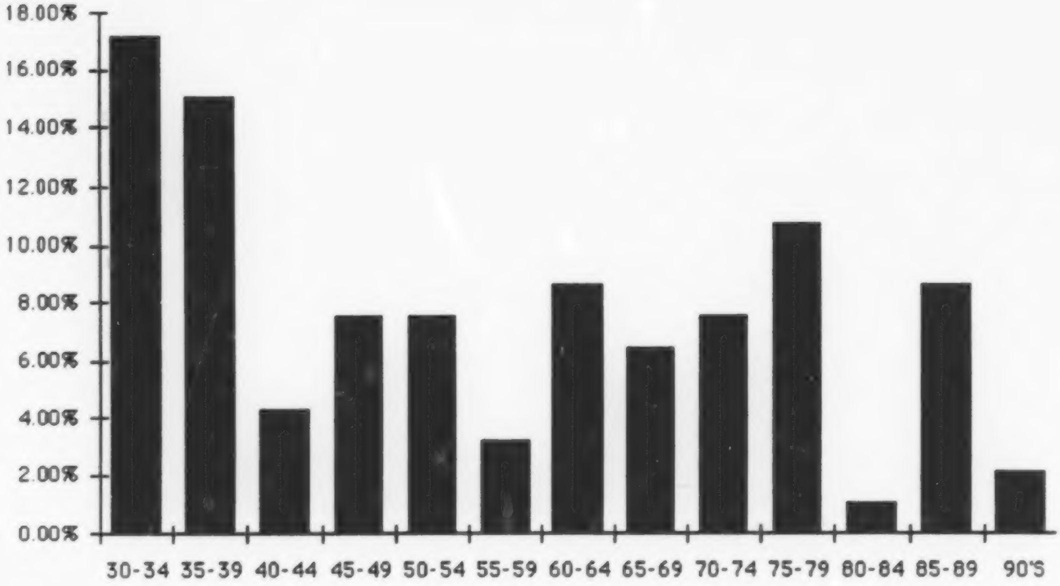
Our demographic profile of business people corroborates the findings of Defleur (1964); Leshay (1992); Seggar & Wheeler (1973); and Weigel & Loomis (1981). The majority of plot functional characters in top grossing sound films about business are white (96 percent), male (63 percent), American (90 percent), and adults (77 percent fall in the approximate age group of 20 to 60). As this study's population geographically defines it, the business world resides in urban (66 percent) America (82 percent).

Manufacturing (44 percent) and non-financial services (32 percent) are the two business sectors most frequently portrayed in films. This emphasis on manufacturing and non-financial service is evenly distributed over the 65 years. The portrayal of financial services such as banking and brokering is surprisingly scarce. Only 15 percent of businesses fell into this category. However, it is noteworthy that 49 percent of financial service portrayals are dispersed around the Great Depression years (1930 to 1939).

Drama and comedy are the two film genres most frequently used to narrate business stories. Our results indicate that 86 percent of business films fall into either the drama (43 percent) or comedy (43 percent) categories. The genres of horror, disaster, mystery, science fiction, and fantasy produced zero cases, while the combined frequencies of action adventure, thriller, musical, biography, and western genres contributed a mere 14 percent of all coded business films. The idea that business is most likely to be either dramatized or satirized raises questions about the functionality of this pattern. First, it may be argued that the dramatic genre is marked by its weighty treatment of a subject matter and the underlying assumption that it reproduces reality. In this sense drama legitimizes business as a viable route to success. If legitimization of business within a social system is sought, it is clear why escapist genres like musicals, mystery, fantasy, and science fiction are not popular structures for telling stories about business. On the other hand, if business was frequently featured in horror or thriller films, the pursuit of financial success may be discouraged. However, comedy functions to counteract the possible over-dramatization of the business environment. Together, drama and comedy provide a balanced portrayal of the business world.

The distribution of business films over the past 65 years reveals a striking concentration during the 1930's and a relatively even distribution over all other years. Figure 1 illustrates that 34 percent of the population were released during 1930 to 1939. We found no top grossing business films during the years of transition from silent to sound films (1927 to 1929).

FIGURE 1: DISTRIBUTION OF BUSINESS FILMS OVER TIME



Levy (1991) argues that in order to fulfill the film industry's vital interest in profit, it aims at satisfying mass desires by adjusting itself to change in the society's mental climate. Our finding of a significant concentration of business films during the Great Depression clearly supports Levy's (1991) argument.

Myth

The *American Dream* seemed to be the overarching myth which surfaced in business films during times of economic strife, especially during the 1930s. This myth builds on the idea that, irrespective of an individual's socioeconomic background, his/her dreams, ambitions and goals can be actualized. Hard work and personal integrity are presented as the key ingredients for unlimited spiritual, social, and financial growth.

Ambition is applauded as a "hunger" or "desire" for personal self-improvement which ultimately impacts positively upon the larger society. *Rags to Riches* and *The Underdog Succeeding* are typical *American Dream* narratives.

The *Money Can't Buy Happiness* myth also surfaced when the *American Dream* myth was less prevalent. This myth dominated during the 1940s and 1960s, decades when the American economy was experiencing economic growth. This myth implies that social class mobility and financial gain are inherently evil and corruptive processes which result in tragedy, misery, and self-destruction.

Two variations of the same narrative are discernible. While the *American Dream* myth promotes individual advancement, the *Money Can't Buy Happiness* myth presents greed as an irrational and excessive appetite for power and material gain. Greed stretches beyond self-improvement into the realm of exploitation and excess. This unscrupulousness is ultimately met with sweeping losses. *Conspicuous Consumption* and *The Poor Little Rich Person* are common outcomes of *Money Can't Buy Happiness*. The wealthy are presented as individuals who are "lacking" the sincerity and warmth of family relations, romance and friendship (Cawelti, 1975).

Congruent with the *American Dream* myth, and by far the most prominent message throughout all business films is the idea that good triumphs over evil. It is only in the 1970s that the *Power Corrupts* myth predominates. This is not surprising given the political climate in America during this period (e.g., the Watergate scandal and the end of the Vietnam War).

Keys to Success

For those characters seeking to better themselves either financially or materially in their career, 13 variables, or keys to success, were measured. These keys included education, sex,[1] misrepresentation,[2] violence,[3] hard work, taking risks, luck, inheritance, ambition, having something that someone wants, betrayal, breaking the law, and sacrifice (See Table 1). Keys to success were assessed on two levels. First, we evaluated the relevance of each key in attaining success. Second, if the key played a role in the character's success, we qualified it as either a stepping stone, an impediment, or irrelevant .

Table 1: Key to success

KEYS TO SUCCESS	% Yes	% Stepping stone	% Impediment
Education	2	57	0
Sex	14	71	13
Misrepresentation	12	76	11
Violence	7	43	22
Hard work	35	86	1
Risk	25	67	23
Luck	9	90	7
Inheritance	7	87	0
Ambition	47	79	9
Has something someone wants	18	78	10
Betrayal	18	41	26
Break the law	15	39	39
Sacrifice	23	43	26

Four keys to success appeared considerably more often than the others. These included ambition (47 percent), hard work (35 percent), risk (25 percent), and sacrifice (23 percent). Moreover, these four keys to success were used as a stepping stone the majority of the time (79 percent, 88 percent, 67 percent, and 43 percent respectively). However, it is interesting to note that risk and sacrifice dominated as impediments to success (23 percent and 26 percent of the time). In contrast, ambition and hard work were identified as impediments only nine percent and one percent of the time.

Consistent with past research (Freedman, 1992; Horton, 1989), these results indicate a general emphasis on the Protestant work ethic as exemplified in the *American Dream* myth. Business films seem to advance the promise that the hard-working individual who has the proper drive and makes the necessary sacrifices will achieve success. However, the ambitious, hard-working person has a greater chance of achieving success than those who take risks or make sacrifices. Hence the cultivation of the *American Dream* myth: Success comes to those who work hard, keep trying, take risks and make sacrifices. An addendum to this message is that care must be taken in terms of what is risked or sacrificed, for it may impede success.

Five variables appeared which indicate an "antisocial" route to success. These include betrayal (18 percent), breaking the law (15 percent), sex (14 percent), misrepresentation (12 percent), and violence (7 percent). These keys to success were used as stepping stones most frequently (42 percent, 40 percent, 71 percent, 76 percent, and 43 percent, respectively) except for the category of breaking the law. Breaking the law was an impediment to success in as many cases as it was a stepping stone. Lastly, betrayal and violence served as impediments to success far more frequently (26 percent and 22 percent of the time) than sex or misrepresentation (13 percent and 11 percent of the time).

The above findings support the view that business films advance the myth of the *American Dream.* Antisocial variables serve as reminders of what not to do; they appear less often and are more likely to impede success than prosocial variables such as ambition, hard work, and education. It is interesting to note that the use of sex or misrepresentation in an attempt to achieve success is not portrayed so negatively as betrayal, breaking the law or violence.

Contrary to the aforementioned variables that require activity from the character, two passive or "accidental" keys to success appeared, albeit infrequently. In 9 percent of the cases, luck played a role in the character's success, while inheritance was a factor 7 percent of the time. Not surprisingly, both luck and inheritance served as stepping stones most of the time (90 percent and 87 percent respectively). Moreover, luck functioned as an impediment in only 7 percent of the cases. Inheritance was never an impediment to success. Nevertheless, these findings indicate that success through passivity (through luck or inheritance) is rare. Such a message implies that one's labor and struggle is not in vain. On the contrary, our results seem to suggest that success comes to those who are active and who work hard.

The two remaining variables, "has something someone wants" and "education" represent aspects of knowledge as keys to success. The first variable, "has something someone wants," appeared in 14 percent of the instances and incorporates items that someone else wants such as ideas, inventions, skills, or information. "Has something that someone wants" functioned as a stepping stone to success in 73 percent of the cases. The second variable, "seeking further education, " however, occurred in only 2 percent of the cases. In fact, of all coded keys to success, education (though never an impediment to success) appeared the least. This may be because, as Bidney (1968) suggests, intelligence and education are destructive and divisive forces which often shatter the solidarity among members of a social system.

Overall, our findings support past research and theory indicating that the media maintain the social order by communicating the *American Dream* myth(Berk, 1977; Gray, 1982: Horton, 1989: Levy, 1991). Our data suggest that ambition, hard work, risk, and sacrifice are far more likely to bring about success in business than antisocial actions, accidental/passive events, or knowledge. Indeed, this message functions to preserve the social structure by keeping alive the hope that anyone can achieve success through honest hard work.

Class Mobility

Three hundred and sixteen characters were coded for class placement at the beginning and at the end of each film as reported in the reviews. The class membership of characters at the beginning of the films was determined as follows (Papazian, 1983): Ninety-five (30 percent) were coded as upper class-- "old rich" or "nouveau riche" successful elite. Ninety-four (30 percent) were upper-middle class--wealthier-than-average but not extraordinarily rich. Fifty-one (16 percent) were coded as middle class thus exhibiting above average comforts and living standards. Forty-one (31 percent) were working class--"just getting along," or "barely making ends meet." Four (1 percent) were considered "lumpen"--below poverty level or destitute. The class of 30 characters was undetermined. One character's class, which the review reported as slave, was coded as other. By the end of the film, the following observations of character's class position were reported: 124 (39 percent) were now considered to be upper class; 85 (27 percent) were upper-middle class; 44 (14 percent) were coded as middle class; 11 (3 percent) were working class, three were lumpen, 48 (15 percent) were undetermined and one was coded as "other." (See Table 2)

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Upper class	1	88	0	3	0	0	4	0	95	30%
Upper-middle class	2	13	67	3	0	0	10	1	94	30%
Middle class	3	4	11	30	2	0	4	0	51	16%
Working class	4	13	5	7	9	2	5	0	41	13%
Lumpen	5	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	4	1%
Indeterminate	6	4	0	1	0	0	25	0	30	9%
Other	7	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0%
		124	85	44	11	3	48	1	316	
		39%	27%	14%	3%	1%	15%	0%		

Table 2: Overall class mobility transitions

We observed an overall migration of characters to the upper class to the detriment of all other classes. The population of the upper class increased by 29 characters (from 95 to 124, a 30 percent increase) while the population of upper-middle class decreased by 9 characters (from 94 to 89, a 10 percent decrease). The middle class also decreased by seven characters (from 51 to 44, a 14 percent increase). A significant movement out of the working class is exemplified by a decrease of 30 characters (from 41 to 11, a 70 percent decrease). Finally, the lumpen class decreased by one character (from 4 to 3, a 25 percent decrease).

To understand clearly the details of the migration between classes, we only focus on the defined classes (upper, upper-middle, middle, working, and lumpen). We then calculated the percentage of transitions of a given class to all others. (Table 3).

		1	2	3	4	5
Upper class	1	97%	0%	3%	0%	0%
Upper-middle class	2	16%	81%	4%	0%	0%
Middle class	3	9%	23%	64%	4%	0%
Working class	4	36%	14%	19%	25%	6%
Lumpen	5	25%	50%	0%	0%	25%

Table 3: Transitions from a class to all others

By observing the percentages on the diagonal of the class matrix (Table 3), we note that the majority of classes are relatively stable. However, a tendency to migrate upward is noticeable. Generally, members of the upper class did not move. In fact, 97 percent retained membership in the upper class. Of those characters in the upper-middle class, 81 percent maintained their class status and 16 percent moved to the upper class. Sixty-four percent of middle-class characters remained in the middle class while 23 percent migrated to the upper-middle class and 9 percent to the upper class. Yet, of working class characters only 25 percent maintained their class status. Nineteen percent moved to the middle class, 14 percent to the upper-middle class and 36 percent to the upper class. What is striking about these numbers is that the films seem to depict class movement from middle to upper classes as a progressive mobility. In contrast, migration from the working and lumpen classes are dramatic jumps. Thus, the middle class moves primarily to upper-middle and the upper-middle to the upper class. However, the working class moves primarily to the upper class and secondarily to the upper-middle class. Members of the lumpen class move *only* to the upper-middle and upper classes.

It is interesting to note that with one exception, female characters who change class position move upward. Of these characters, all but four were coded as purely good. Surprisingly, anti-social behavior (breaking the law, misrepresentation, betrayal, etc.) was characteristic of successful female characters who were coded as good. It appears that "good" women have to break the law, misrepresent themselves and betray others in order to climb the ladder of success in the business world. Furthermore, although hard work, ambition, and luck, are keys to success for both males and females, sex and marriage were reported as keys to success for the majority of upwardly mobile female characters.

Of the seven characters who used education as a key to success, four (two males and two females) used it as a stepping stone. It is significant that these females jumped from working class to upper class positions, while one male remained in his class of origin and the other migrated upward to the neighboring class. This may indicate that education plays a role for the upward mobility of female characters, perhaps as a way to propel them into the upper class where they may find a marriageable partner.

When the characters in the reviews move, they move upward: Twenty-one percent of all characters migrated up. This figure contrasts sharply with the four percent of characters who migrate down. The remaining 75 percent of characters maintain their class status. Most downward mobility occurred to neighboring classes with the exception of the upper class. Instead, these characters fell to the middle class. A comparison with mobility figures for males in the United States may help to reveal the social mobility myth at work in business films. Looking only at upper class males in the reviews, we find that they comprise 32 percent (64/200) of all males in the coding population at the beginning of the films. By the end of the films, males in the upper class have increased to 40 percent (80/200). In contrast, Lopreato (1972) estimates that only 12 percent of males occupy the upper class position. Furthermore, he notes that 10 percent of males move from working class to upper class, but *only* intergenerationally. In other words, Lopreato considers sons of fathers moving up rather than individuals within their generation. Conversely, our data indicate that 35 percent of male characters move from working to upper class. This shows a bias toward representing upward mobility for individuals in excess of the reported actual movement (Lopreato, 1972).

Finally, we found that the majority of the films which portray upward mobility in the male population were released in the 1930s and the 1970s. It appears that the Great Depression not only stimulated releases of more top grossing business films than any other decade, but also produced characters that are significantly more upwardly mobile than any other period. Indeed, our data suggest that in these times and for practically all cases, spiritual, material, occupational, and class movement is upward. The message communicated is that the *American Dream* is accessible to everyone, especially those members of the lower class. For as we have seen, during times of economic depression when large populations are unemployed and destitute, films promote progress and entrepreneurship. They thus fulfill their role of reaffirming hope in life and the stability of the social fabric.

Occupation

Nine categories were determined for character's occupations. Each character's occupation was coded at the beginning and at the end of the film as reported in the reviews. Initial occupations were observed as follows (Table 4): 14 percent of characters were service workers: clerical and kindred workers; 13 percent were white-collar managerial: business manager, middle-management, non-gold collar executive, project leader; 12 percent were white-collar non-managerial: technical, sales and kindred workers; 7 percent were blue collar workers: skilled, semi-skilled or unskilled manual labor, artisan, operatives and kindred workers; 17 were gold-collar executive: executive or proprietor of a large concern or a major professional (CEO, president, chair of the board, etc.); 6 percent were financially independent; and 4 percent were unemployed. The occupations of 14 percent of all characters could not be clearly determined from the reviews. Thirteen percent held occupations other than the specified categories. For this analysis, those characters in the other and undetermined categories were not included. Thus, roughly 30 percent of our population was not considered. Since a large percentage of our population is undetermined, we will remain conservative about any conclusions which we draw about the patterns of inter-occupational migrations. Although we consider that those occupations which fall in the other category are somewhat extreme (e.g., slave), finer definition of occupational categories in subsequent studies may be beneficial.

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		
Service worker	1	16	6	1	0	5	3	7	4	2	44	14%
White collar mgr.	2	1	26	0	0	5	1	2	5	0	40	13%
White collar non mgr	3	1	0	27	0	2	0	2	4	1	37	12%
Blue collar	4	0	3	1	10	3	1	2	0	2	22	7%
Gold collar exec.	5	0	0	0	1	41	8	2	1	2	55	17%
Financially Ind.	6	0	0	0	0	1	15	1	2	1	20	6%
Unemployed	7	1	0	0	1	2	3	6	0	1	14	4%
Undetermined	8	2	1	0	0	1	1	1	33	4	43	14%
Others	9	0	0	1	0	1	3	2	5	29	41	13%
		21	36	30	12	61	35	25	54	42	316	
		7%	11%	9%	4%	19%	11%	8%	17%	13%		

Table 4: Overall occupation mobility transitions

We normalized the transition from one occupation to all others with respect to the total number of characters who held this position initially, thereby deriving the percentage of migration from any occupation to all others. From the resulting tableau we observed that the percentage of transitions were somewhat scattered. We then attempted, through substitution of columns and rows, to restructure the tableau around its principal diagonal (Table 5). In doing this we were able to cluster occupational categories into four groups. Our criteria for cluster boundaries was a 15 percent transition. We found one group which was comprised of service and white-collar managerial workers. The second group consisted of financially independent, gold-collar executive and unemployed characters. The third group included the blue collar worker. The last group contained white-collar non-managerial workers. These groups are highlighted in Table 5.

		2	1	7	6	5	4	3
White collar mgr.	2	**74%**	**3%**	6%	3%	14%	0%	0%
Service worker	1	**16%**	**42%**	18%	8%	13%	0%	3%
Unemployed	7	0%	8%	**46%**	**23%**	**15%**	8%	0%
Financially Ind.	6	0%	0%	**6%**	**88%**	**6%**	0%	0%
Gold collar exec.	5	0%	0%	**4%**	**15%**	**79%**	2%	0%
Blue collar	4	15%	0%	10%	5%	15%	**50%**	5%
White collar non mgr	3	0%	3%	6%	0%	6%	0%	**84%**

Table 5: Transitions from one occupation to all others

Not surprisingly, occupational migration complemented class migration. For example, blue collar workers remained blue collar (50 percent) unless they jumped to gold-collar executive (15 percent) or to white collar managerial (15 percent) positions. We found that white-collar non-managerial and working class were clearly separated; there was not much movement (5 percent) between the two. The white-collar non-managerial was relatively stable: 84 percent remain in this position. Migration to executive and to unemployment was equally distributed at 6 percent each. We interpreted services and white-collar managerial as a cluster primarily because of the 16 percent transition from service to white collar managerial. It is notable however, that the reverse transition is somewhat unlikely (3 percent). This pattern corresponds to traditional career development. In the cluster including gold-collar executive, financially independent, and unemployed the categories financially independent and gold-collar executive are closely tied together, as expected. They remain in the same position 88 percent and 79 percent of the time or migrated from one to the other in most other cases. It was surprising to find unemployment in this cluster. However, its inclusion was determined by a high frequency of transition from the unemployment position to financially independent (23 percent) and gold-collar executive

(15 percent). The inclusion of unemployment in that cluster also called for the marginal inclusion of service which was also in the previous cluster because of a high frequency of transition from service to unemployment (18 percent). Transition from a middle position of service and from marginally blue collar worker to unemployment may not be unusual in times of economic hardship. However, the migration from unemployment to upper occupational positions does not follow an expected or traditional progression. Instead, it appears to reinforce the notion that the American dream is accessible, particularly to those who may have the least resources to actually attain it.

Conclusion

Our study of business film reviews seems to corroborate research about business and class in media (Berk, 1977; Butsch, 1992; Byers, 1987; Desser, 1981; Freeman, 1992; Gentile & Miller, 1961; Giroux, 1990; Lipsitz, 1986; Thomas & Callahan, 1982; and Traube, 1992). We found that the upper class is disproportionately represented and that transition to this class and its concomitant occupational categories is also disproportionate. This unbalance should be expected, given the pervasiveness of the *American Dream* myth and the social function of Hollywood film as Levy (1991) has suggested. According to our analysis, it is possible to fulfill the *American Dream* . Indeed, business films held out the promise of success to those individuals who worked hard, were ambitious and were willing to make sacrifices.

Our results indicate that the *American dream* myth is a prevalent theme of Hollywood business films. This myth surfaced most frequently during times of economic difficulty (the 1930s and 1970s). Indeed, there were more top grossing business films during the years of the Great Depression than during any other decade. Other myths are of historical interest as well. The *power corrupts* myth surfaced most frequently in a decade of political cynicism (the 1970s). The *money can't buy happiness* myth emerged in about half of all business films, and was distributed rather evenly throughout all time periods.

Although the major research questions of this study focus on broad structural narrative, the validity of using plot summaries for a film analysis remains potentially problematic. Therefore, it is important to note that the conclusions of this study are based upon a content analysis of a secondary source. The viability of actually watching 3,264 films produced over a 65 year period was a factor in deciding to use plot summaries. Initial inquiry into the availability of all the films in this population also revealed significant problems. However, future attempts at analyses of the actual films should not be abandoned.

Coding from film screenings will provide more in-depth character analysis which may perhaps reveal further narrative patterns that are, at this point, invisible. However, this initial study has been fruitful, not only as an exploratory attempt for more in-depth future analyses, but also by providing insight into Hollywood's representation of social mobility and myth in business related films.

Notes

[1] The character reportedly engages in activity which includes kissing, hugging, touching, and intercourse.

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[2] The character deliberately ignores or conveniently forgets crucial information and/or makes misleading implications or statements in an effort to manipulate another person's thoughts or actions

[3] Gerbner's (1979) definition of violence is used with the exceptions of self-inflicted violence and natural disaster. An overt expression of physical force with or without a weapon, against others, compelling action against one's will on pain of being hurt or killed or actually killing or hurting.

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Appendix:
Top Grossing Feature Films (1927 - 1992)With Companies, Corporations, Or Factories Central To Their Plots

1927: (0)

1928: (0)

1929: (0)

1930: (3)
The Cohens and Kelly's in Scotland
Feet First
The Office Wife

1931: (4)
Five Star Final
The Front Page
The Millionaire
Young As You Feel

1932: (7)
American Madness
Big Broadcasts
Business and Pleasure
High Pressure
Prosperity
Red Headed Woman
The Rich Are Always With Us

1933: (3)
Dinner at Eight
The Working Man
Only Yesterday

1934: (3)
Handy Andy
The House of Rothschild
Imitation of Life

1935: (6)
Broadway Bill
Follies Bergere de Paris
Front Page Woman
Life Begins at Forty
Modern Times
Oil For the Lamps of China

1936: (4)
Come and Get It
Dodsworth
Mr. Deeds Goes to Town
Wife vs. Secretary

1937: (6)
Artists and Models
Lloyd's of London
Saratoga
Topper
Waikiki Wedding
Wells Fargo

1938: **(3)**
Arkansas Traveler
Holiday
You Can't Take With You

1939: **(0)**

1940: **(1)**
Boom Town

1941: **(1)**
Citizen Kane

1942: **(1)**
Take a Letter Darling

1943: **(1)**
Hello Frisco Hello

1944: **(1)**
Mrs. Parkington

1945: **(1)**
Road to Utopia

1946: **(1)**
Undercurrent

1947: **(2)**
Hucksters
Sea of Grass

1948: **(1)**
Good Sam

1949: **(4)**
Fountainhead
Any Number Can Play
House of Strangers
Tulsa

1950: **(2)**
Tea For Two
Montana

1951: **(1)**
Born Yesterday

1952: **(3)**
Steel Trap
Lovely To Look At
Bad and Beautiful

1953: None

1954: **(3)**
Executive Suite
Woman's World
Johnny Guitar

1955: **(1)**
Phoenix City Story

1956: **(1)**

The Man In the Gray Flannel Suit

1957: **(3)**
Written On the Wind
The Solid Gold Cadillac
Pajama Game

1958: **(0)**

1959: **(0)**

1960: **(2)**
Cash McCall
From the Terrace

1961: **(1)**
All In a Night's Work

1962: **(1)**
Lover Come Back

1963: **(2)**
The Thrill of It All
Wheeler Dealers

1964: **(2)**
Good Neighbor Sam
The Carpetbaggers

1965: **(1)**
Strange Bedfellows

1966: **(1)**
Darling

1967: **(3)**
Hotel
How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying
Caprice

1968: **(0)**

1969: **(1)**
Horse in the Gray Flannel Suit

1970: **(2)**
The Hawaiians
Scrooge

1971: **(4)**
Sometimes A Great Notion
The Love Machine
The Barefoot Executive
Willie Wonka & the Chocolate Factory

1972: **(0)**

1973: **(2)**
Oklahoma Crude
Save the Tiger

1974: **(0)**

1975: **(1)**
White Line Fever

1976: **(2)**
Silent Movie
Network

1977: **(2)**
Fun with Dick & Jane
Which Way is Up

1978: **(2)**
The Betsy
F.I.S.T

1979: **(3)**
The China Syndrome
The Jerk
Norma Rae

1980: **(2)**
The Electric Horseman
9 to 5

1981: **(0)**

1982: **(0)**

1983: **(1)**
Trading Places

1984: **(1)**
Silkwood

1985: **(0)**

1986: **(1)**
Nothing in Common

1987: **(4)**
The Secret of My Success
Wall Street
Tin Men
Broadcast News

1988: **(4)**
Big
Big Business
Working Girl
Scrooged

1989: **(0)**

1990: **(2)**
Pretty Woman
Cadillac Man

1991: **(0)**

1992: **(0)**

ENHANCING EMPATHY IN THE TRAUMA VICTIM INTERVIEW:

WHAT WAS LEARNED FROM JOURNALISM STUDENTS

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ENHANCING EMPATHY IN THE TRAUMA VICTIM INTERVIEW:
WHAT WAS LEARNED FROM JOURNALISM STUDENTS

This paper details the introduction of trauma interview instruction to the journalism classroom. The study begins by summarizing what has been learned from the academic and trade literature, followed by an explanation of the role play exercise, our principal method of investigation. The findings support the value of the role play in classroom instruction and suggest the need for careful training in preparation for the trauma victim interview

Introduction

During Spring Quarter, 1994, the University of Washington School of Communications introduced trauma instruction into all of its print and broadcast journalism courses, as well as journalism ethics and crisis public relations courses. About 125 students heard about trauma's effects, practiced interviewing trauma victims, and wrote about traumatic events. The premise in developing the trauma program was that since there is little acknowledgement of trauma's effects in the news industry, the optimum site for effective instruction may be the college classroom.[1] We reasoned that the absence of knowledge about trauma could be a barrier to an empathic response by the reporter.

The tragedy-scene interview was chosen as the principal classroom exercise because it compels students to respond to other persons in unfamiliar ways. A classroom scenario placed student reporters at the scene of an attempted murder and suicide where they confronted the adult children of the victims. It was expected that as the scenario was played out, the watching students would be on heightened alert to notice both the resourcefulness and errors of their fellow student.

This paper describes the evaluative process and reports the results of several efforts to learn what had occurred as special attention was paid to trauma in the curriculum.

The intersection of trauma and journalism: literature review

Clinical understanding of trauma came of age in the era that began with World War II and continued through the years after the Vietnam conflict.[2] Journalism evolved in that same period from reportage of personal valor or sacrifice in tragic circumstances to more sophisticated understanding of war, violence, and natural disaster.

Understanding of the intersection of trauma and journalism has developed slowly, however. While traumatic events -- wars, earthquakes, fires, and murders -- remain the mainstay of daily journalism, most reporters still treat the afflicted in much the same way they did at mid-century. While print journalism for the most part hides the interchange between victim and reporter from public view, television every day affirms the harsh, sometimes brutal, character of the reporter interview with the traumatized person. Indeed, the ambush interview sometimes produces a state like trauma in the unsuspecting person as the audience watches. Journalistic practice appears to assume that all trauma survivors are equally ready to report their experiences and mental state to the mass audience, a fact directly contradicted by a substantial clinical literature.

The traumatized person, one who has experienced what a mental-health specialist would call post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), is affected by the event immediately. He or she may suffer any or all of the conditions that occur in the aftermath of tragedy and personal loss: Numbness may block some awareness of the event, or the victim may deny its reality; shame, rage, despair, anger and hatred may be part of the victim's emotional response to the event; memories of the event may force themselves repeatedly into the consciousness of the survivor; anxiety may keep the person nervous, edgy, and frightened.[3] Judith Lewis Herman has suggested how important this complex set of reactions can be:

> The dialectic of trauma gives rise to complicated, uncanny alterations of consciousness, which George Orwell, one of the committed truth-tellers of our century, called "doublethink," and which mental health professions, searching for a calm, precise language call "dissociation." It results in the protean, dramatic, and often bizarre symptoms of hysteria which Freud recognized a century ago as disguised communications about sexual abuse in childhood.[4]

The typical trauma victim, in the hours and days after the event, responds to strangers, such as journalists, differently than he or she would in normal circumstances. And the effects don't disappear at once: trauma continues to affect the survivor over a long period. As long as six months after the event, nearly half of all victims still experience some symptoms of PTSD.[5] There is substantial evidence that the witness, as well as the victim, is changed by the event. He or she has trouble finding adequate language to describe events and shares the victim's fear of being stigmatized and isolated by identification with the event.[6]

The reporter's conventional demand on both victim and witness ignores this reality. The journalist's questions are direct, clearly expressing a desire for information and an assumption that the other person can easily be forthcoming. The exchange is framed by a linear, logical description of the event. The reporter assumes that she or he is in control of the situation; the victim and witness are assumed to be in control of their circumstances also. In fact, though, the traumatic event may exert its influence on all those involved in the reporting process -- reporter, victim, and witness.

Few reporting textbooks even mention trauma's power; some give reporters tips on getting sources to talk, implying that reporter and source are equally able to respond to the event. One widely used textbook does not mention trauma, but hints at its effects. Melvin Mencher, in a short chapter on covering accidents and disasters, comments on interviewing witnesses:

> Eyewitness accounts should be treated with care, especially if they are of events that unfold rapidly, and particularly if the witness to the event is emotionally involved. Studies of eyewitnesses of crimes have shown that their reports are incomplete, sometimes unreliable and often incorrect.

While the text offers tips on helping a witness recall an incident, it says nothing about the emotional experience of the witness.

Research and trade journals carried little literature either on the introduction of trauma reporting to the classroom or on the effects of trauma in the reporting process in the past ten years. Although there was a substantial amount of anecdotal evidence about trauma and journalism, two studies addressed these issues empirically.

Andrew Freinkel, et al., concluded that the dissociative symptoms experienced by reporters who witnessed the violence of an execution (in which there was no risk of harm to the witnesses, that was socially sanctioned, and for which they could plan and psychologically prepare themselves) were similar to the symptoms of people who had endured a natural disaster. While none of the journalists reported long-lasting trauma, many reported some short-term impact on their lives.

The second study showed those subjects who had attended a workshop on the effects of PTSD "had a greater knowledge, were more accepting, and were more facilitative with people who have PTSD." Although the subjects were professional counselors, the results suggest that reporters also might respond differently to people with symptoms of PTSD if they first received classroom instruction.

Trade literature provides anecdotal evidence that reporters confront trauma, without offering much analytical insight. The Los Angeles riots, the San Francisco earthquake, and the Challenger disaster have spawned articles by reporters that illuminate either personal or group responses to reporting about trauma. One assignment in the

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1960s changed the direction of the life of the Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist William Serrin. Serrin told a writer about covering the 1967 Detroit riot:

> But the riot sort of changed my life. I really began to distrust cops and other authorities and I had not had that experience in journalism before. ... Before the riot a lot of my goals were things like to rise in journalism, go to Vietnam. ... The story was right here, not in Washington or Paris or Vietnam.

Less common are the articles that reveal the effects of covering the day-to-day violence that is found on the police beat. Cheever Griffin described his experiences as a police-beat reporter in Chicago:

> It was on that summer night that I realized how accustomed to death I had grown in a short period of time. Less than six months earlier I had been handing in feature stories for a grade.... True I am only 24 years old, supposedly too young to be jaded. But since I took this job, I have learned to elevate myself above the tragedy. I haven't been able to separate myself from it though. Death is not cheap; rather it always seems to leave a room full of people who weep and cry out and wonder how they will go on. Every death is a story whether City News thinks so or not.

Alf Pratte's study of journalists who killed themselves shows that some journalists who have contemplated suicide and written about it were intimately exposed to death as part of their experience on the police beat [or] as war correspondents...."[12]

The literature suggests four objectives for the introduction of trauma reporting to the classroom: (1) identification of the symptoms of trauma, (2) recognition of a possible "residual trauma" to the reporter from exposure to an incident, (3) strategies for interviewing traumatized individuals, and (4) consideration of ethical issues related to the coverage of trauma and the interview process.

Role-playing the interview

Given these objectives and the importance of the interview in the gathering of news, the interview, the interaction between journalist and victim, was chosen as the vehicle by which many of these issues would be introduced. The following section describes the classroom methods in detail.

The journalistic interview has been called "a central tool in the journalistic profession," and "a medium of important social influence and potential social impact."[13] According to the seminal work by Eugene Webb and Jerry Salancik, of the four main techniques used by reporters to gather information (observation, records, tips and interviewing), interviewing is "the most perilous and unreliable method."[14]

The journalistic interview is frequently a battle of wits, occasionally adversarial and very often unwelcome. Add to this already awkward situation the complication of an interviewee who just has been traumatized, and you have a prescription for further traumatization. How best, then, to educate journalists about the complexities of such situations?

The role-play has been used by educators for years to create "controlled spontaneity" in the classroom. The pedagogical value of the role-play has been confirmed. Silverman, for example, found that college students retain "10 percent of what they read, 26 percent of what they hear, 30 percent of what they see, 50 percent of what they see and hear, 70 percent of what they say, and 90 percent of what they say as they do something."[15] There is a sense of drama in the classroom during such exercises, as no one -- not even the instructor -- knows what the outcome of the assignment will be.

A study of the effectiveness of the role-play exercise in teaching graduate-level psychological consultant interviewing skills showed that role-play exercises were "far more effective than discussion activities" in facilitating student acquisition of competent interviewing skills. Although there are certainly many differences between clinical interviews and journalistic ones, "all interviews involve interpersonal communication aimed at eliciting information."[7] The role-play has been described as combining "means-centered instruction with problem-centered work" -- a way to focus on the process of reporting and interviewing in a problematic situation, wherein "'rights' and 'wrongs' are not highly specifiable."[8] Thus, it was reasoned that if the role-play is effective in teaching clinical interviewing skills, it also would be useful in teaching journalistic interviewing skills.

The spontaneity and uncertainty of a good role-play exercise mirror the spontaneity and uncertainty of the world outside the classroom.[9] It was therefore viewed as an invaluable tool in teaching aspiring reporters about the art of interviewing -- especially in the face of trauma, where right and wrong depend so much on the circumstances and the particular individuals involved.

Three graduate students agreed to play the bereaved individuals in the role-play; the undergraduate students were to play reporters sent to interview them. The graduate students were not trained actors or drama students. The actors read a briefing sheet, based on information provided by the staff of Virginia Mason Medical Center Separation and Loss Clinic. The sheet describes the stages of the grieving process and suggests coping strategies for those going through this process. We felt that a realistic role-play depended on our actors being able to immerse themselves in the role of bereaved individuals. (See Appendix A.)

The role-play called for two actors to exemplify two coping mechanisms we wanted students to encounter.[20] One actor portrayed a stunned, dazed and "zombie-like" person. There appears to be an absence of feelings in those coping in this manner, and they usually try to focus on facts and taking care of immediate problems, deflecting any personal emotion. One who copes in this manner appears to be handling things quite well but often ends up most traumatized many months later. The other actor portrayed an hysterical individual. Those coping with grief in this manner often feel a need to move around and get fresh air. They often experience dizziness and/or panic, and show a tendency to sob, weep, or wail openly.

We wanted the scenario to be as real as possible without becoming too complicated. The scenario was based loosely on an incident that occurred in Milwaukee in 1987. The interviewees were the children of an older couple who were shot in their home. In the scenario (see Appendix B), the police tell reporters it appears the husband shot his wife, then turned the gun on himself. He is dead; she is being taken to a nearby hospital. The children (in their thirties) are unaware of the trouble when they approach the home to have dinner with their parents. In shock, they attempt to cross the police line. They are stopped by a detective who explains that no one is allowed to cross the police line, but that he will find some help for them. In the moment they stand there alone, they confront a reporter who has just arrived at the scene, seeking information about the incident.[21]

To learn as much about the role-play as possible, volunteers in some of the classes took part in the role-play outside of the class and without receiving any orientation to trauma. Those interviews, as well as those conducted in classes, were videotaped. In the classes, other students volunteered or were chosen to be reporters, and were given about ten minutes to prepare for the interview. When the role-play began, it was run three times, each student volunteer having an opportunity to conduct the interview on his or her own, without interference from the other volunteers.

Although the periods of time devoted to trauma instruction varied by course from one hour to four hours, a single format was used for all classes. In advance of class meetings, students read an article on the nature of trauma.[22] Staff members from Virginia Mason Medical Center's Separation and Loss Clinic and Harborview Medical Center, both in Seattle, spoke about the effects of trauma, the process of grieving and the problems bereaved individuals often face in dealing with "the system," including police, the courts, hospitals, and journalists.[23] Role plays were conducted, followed by group discussion involving actors, students, and visiting experts. (The various activities in the instruction unit simply expanded to fill the time allotted by the course instructor.)

Assessing trauma instruction

Three means were used to assess the value of the instruction and the role-play. (1) Students were given brief questionnaires before and after the presentation and role-play and were invited to comment on the exercise in oral discussions conducted after each role-play. (2) The actors were interviewed at length about their responses to the exercise. (3) A videotape record was kept of each role-play. This paper reports on the first two forms of feedback only.

The most noticeable change from the pretest to the post-test was that students, overall, became overly sensitized to trauma. For instance, a psychiatrist had noted during the orientation that 45 percent of those involved in traumatic situations will remain symptomatic six months later. On the pretest, nearly 40 percent of students answered this multiple-choice question correctly, and 30 percent of the students thought the number would be higher than 45 percent. However, after the presentations and role-play, only 25 percent of the students answered this question correctly; the other 75 percent thought the number would be higher.

Female and male students agreed on almost everything, percentages varying only slightly. However, prior to training, male students were more likely to underestimate the long-term effects of trauma. Before witnessing the presentations and role-plays, 72 percent of female students felt either 45 percent or 90 percent of traumatized individuals would remain symptomatic six months after the incident; just 57 percent of the male students felt the same way. (Forty-five was the percentage given in orientations by the Virginia Mason staff; 45 and 90 were the two highest percentages on a list of five choices.) There appeared to be an even stronger response from those who had taken part in the role-play; all eight role-players chose the 90 percent option.

One of the teaching points embedded in the role-plays was the idea that possibly the best thing a reporter could do is to recognize the victim's shock and delay an interview until the victim would have more control over the circumstances. One suggestion repeatedly made was that the reporter might give the interviewees his or her card, and then leave. The interviewees, appreciating this level of respect, would be more likely to give that reporter a better story in the end. In the pre-test, 50 percent of the students seemed already to understand this. However, in the post-test, students were presented with a scenario very much like the one they had witnessed in class and were asked to number five choices in order of desirability. The suggestion of leaving a business card with the interviewees ranked high, but not first. Topping the students' choices was offering to take the interviewees to the hospital (where the interviewees' mother was taken after being shot). Students unanimously rejected the suggestion that the reporter should "insist the interviewee answer your questions because your deadline is near."

A control group's answers on the post-test were very similar to the answers of the students who witnessed the presentations and role-plays. The control group, however, was less sure that an interview would ever be welcomed by a traumatized individual (the experts emphasized in their orientations that it often is welcomed in the aftermath of an unsolved crime).

In the post-test, students were asked two open-ended questions: (1) What were your reactions, feelings or thoughts as you watched or participated in the role-playing of interviews of trauma victims? and (2) Suggest one or two things that a working reporter could do to prevent further traumatization of survivors. An analysis of the responses follows.

Question #1	Non-players (n = 32)	Players (n = 8)
Anxiety for situation	9	6
Anxiety for self	8	5
Anxiety for classmates	5	
Exercise helpful but not realistic	3	1
Exercise increased awareness	2	2
Reporter(s) insensitive	6	
Felt "contagion"		1

Question #2	Non-players	Players
Respect victims/give space	16	1
Offer help of some kind	11	4
Listen	2	1
Minimize further trauma	2	2
Get facts elsewhere	2	
Give victims control	1	
Guard own information	1	
Say you're helping them tell their story		1

Of the 32 non-players who responded, 16 answered that they felt some sort of anxiety as a result of the exercise. Some said they were anxious or uncomfortable over the situation, their classmates, or themselves while some noted anxiety for a combination of factors. Some observers identified strongly with the victims and the reporters:

> " a feeling of helplessness and bewilderment. I had no idea what to do or say and I'm glad that I didn't volunteer to play a reporter. I had no idea how difficult that situation would be."
>
> "[I was] uncomfortable. I thought it was an inappropriate time for a reporter to intervene."
>
> "I was concerned about how aggressive the reporter was being. I wanted the people to be comforted more."
>
> "I was hoping the man would not go berserk and harm the reporter. I felt sympathetic; I wanted it all to be over for the reporter."

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Of the students who participated in the role play as reporters, all eight expressed some form of anxiety. These students offered some of the more thoughtful responses:

> "[I was] nervous because I had never interviewed before. I felt badly for the 'victims.' I also felt like I was intruding upon something 'private.'"
>
> "My first thought is to just leave them alone, but I need info for my story so I need to pursue it. I didn't know what questions to ask or what questions were appropriate or inappropriate."
>
> "I wasn't sure if my questions were too pushy or insensitive. I think this was an excellent exercise. It really opened my eyes to what victims go through."
>
> "I tried to remain calm and kept a helpful tone throughout, yet never felt comfortable 'invading' their time of grief."
>
> "The class sessions were somewhat helpful, but I still don't feel prepared to interact with trauma victims."

The graduate-student actors reported the stressful character of the project as they worked; months later, they revealed readily how difficult it had been to repeat the exercise.[24] For two of the three actors, stresses in personal lives compounded the effects of the role-playing.

The male actor's performance contributed a great deal of the sense of realism to the exercise. Loud remarks, nervous pacing, rapid movements, and confrontational comments marked his responses to student "reporters." Neither the instructor nor the students, however, knew that he was preoccupied with stress over personal matters; he later admitted that at times he channeled his emotions into the role of murder-victim's son. He also later recalled being "shaky and nervous" after each demonstration.

One of the two women actors also played out the role several times without revealing to the instructor that she was experiencing unusual stress because of non-academic matters. The end of a relationship and fears about the security of her home, when combined with the realistic role-play, left symptoms at the time and nearly a year later. She reported having difficulty sleeping at the time, heightened reactions to the other participants in the exercise, including anger at what she took to be inappropriate behavior. Months later, the prospect of being interviewed about the role-plays created a stressful reaction similar to that experienced at the time.

For the second female actor, the stress of the role-play faded more quickly, perhaps within an hour. All three actors recalled at least one incident of feeling intense anger toward some participant in the exercise. In one case, the object was an ill-prepared student who simply refused to play the role and instead mugged for the classroom audience. "I was angry at that smart-aleck student. . . . so furious at her. She was so insensitive." Another actor experienced strong anger when an instructor criticized a student without justification. "I had bad feelings -- I was ready to strangle him -- bad feelings inside me."

The actors singled out one "reporter," a woman with considerable newspaper experience, as "most effective" because she offered help and kept up a conversation with the actors. "It wasn't so much what was said, but you felt comforted," one actor said. They observed that when reporters were able to convey some empathy by concentrating on the victims, the acting was easier. "I forgot people were interviewing us," one actor said. Conversely, the actors and the acting were affected by immature responses or "a mechanical spiel of questions."

Actors also noticed that student reporters responded differently to the three pairings of the "victims." When the two women were together, one cried while the other stoically faced the crisis. Often the "crier" was left alone, while the stoic woman was questioned. A brother-sister pairing in the scenario was more likely to draw the reporter's attention to both actors: in a husband-wife pairing, the reporter always questioned the male actor and ignored his partner.

Discussion

All means of assessment supported the use of the trauma role-play in journalism classrooms. Students and actors absorbed some of the stress of the murder scene, even though the incident was hypothethical, and as a result readily discussed issues in the incident, including reporter behavior, event realism, ethical concerns, and treatment of the incident in a written or broadcast story.

Although classroom discussion was not analyzed for this paper, it can be said informally that whatever time was allotted for debriefing the students, ranging from 30 minutes to two hours, was consumed by intense discussion.

The exercise, in conveying information about the nature of post-traumatic stress disorder, also alerted students to the persistence of symptoms related to trauma in their own lives or in those close to them. While it was the purpose of the exercise to acquaint future journalists with the symptoms their news sources might exhibit, it also seems apparent that some students benefit at the time of the exercise because of previous experiences.

The exercise was revised in subsequent terms because of the feedback gained in these assessment activities. It was decided, for example, to screen prospective actors for unusually stressful events or circumstances and to monitor actors for unexpected stressful events.

In subsequent terms, instruction was elaborated to include specific attention to rape and students were given more elaborate information packets to cover more dimensions of both trauma and rape. The changes reflected our awareness of the need to focus on rape separately from PTSD. Speakers are drawn from rape-assistance organizations, police department victim-assistance programs, and medical centers. Supplementary information now includes lists of resources for both trauma and rape, laws on rape, local and national statistics, terminology, campus policies, and a bibliography.[25]

The students' written responses suggest that at least some of the students involved in the exercise, either as participants or observers, experienced some psychological reaction as a result of the interaction with the "victims." The fact that this reaction resulted from a role play, essentially a hypothetical exercise, demonstrates the strength of the role play as a teaching tool. The experience raises a question for further research: What are the effects on reporters who experience trauma or who interview trauma victims? While instructors must proceed cautiously in this area, with due regard to their students, our experience strongly supports the value of educating journalists about trauma by means of interview role plays, framed by clear information about the disorder and followed, as often as possible, by effective discussion.

Appendix A

Fundamentally, there are two kinds of grief:

BEREAVED #1
-stunned, dazed, overwhelmed, reaction times seem to slow down
-shortness of breath, problems in speaking, unable to cry, numbness, confusion
-on "auto pilot," experiences a sense of unreality
-absence of feeling...a certain flatness, zombie like
-says things like, "I'm fine." ... "I'm all right."
-focuses on facts or immediate problem, deflecting from personal emotion

BEREAVED #2
-needs to move around, get fresh air
-feels dizzy, panicky
-feels as though things are happening too fast
-shows a tendency to cry, sob, weep or wail

All bereaved individuals may experience feelings of frustration and anger, helplessness or fear for their own lives. They also may experience problems concentrating.

Possible physical problems for anyone having undergone sudden and unexpected trauma include chills, headaches, heart flutters, hot flashes, knots in stomach, lowered resistance to disease, nausea, nervousness and tension, and tightness in neck and back.

For the victim's family, the world looks different; others seem to be carrying on with "life as usual." This can make the world seem callous, cold, dull, frightening, indifferent, uncaring and unreal. A common but often unexpressed feeling among the bereaved is their wish to say to the world, "Don't you understand that my life has been turned upside down and that everything is different?"

Often in the case of a suicide or homicide, the bereaved feels responsible, as though there is something he or she could have done to prevent the death of the loved one. In addition, parents who have lost children are often treated by others as lepers, as if the death of a child is contagious.

The method of questioning used by reporters to obtain information often makes the bereaved feel uncomfortable and intimidated. Keep in mind that other people the bereaved has to deal with also may make them feel uncomfortable -- medical examiner, funeral director, police, lawyers, curious onlookers, etc. Material may be gathered as evidence after a homicide and held until the investigation is concluded. The investigation may take longer than the bereaved would want it to. The police may not always act on information the victims' relatives provide. The and other complications can cause much anxiety.

Appendix B

Trauma Scenario

It is 5:15 p.m. You are a reporter for the local newspaper or TV station. A police scanner in one corner of the news room suddenly begins to squawk excitedly. The police have been called to the scene of an apparent murder-suicide on the south side of town.

You and your photographer/camera person are among the first to arrive at the house where the deaths took place. You are not permitted to approach the scene. After awhile, a detective emerges from the house and confirms to reporters there has been one violent death inside the house. Another person was shot twice in the chest, but is still alive. An ambulance is on the scene. The investigation continues, he says, but right now it appears that a man shot his wife and then turned the gun on himself; he is dead, but she is not. The detective says the two have been identified, but he will not release their names because the next-of-kin have not yet been notified of the death.

A short time later, a man and woman in their thirties (or two women in their thirties) approach the scene, looking confused and alarmed. They attempt to cross the police line, but are held back by police. Standing nearby, you hear the two explain to the police that they've just come to visit their parents, who live in the house. They demand to know what's going on. The medical examiner is on the scene and rushes over to talk to them for a few minutes. They again try to push toward the house, asking to see the scene, but are held back. They are told there has been an attempted murder-suicide inside the house and are asked to wait outside the police line for further information (along with you, representatives of other news organizations, and curious neighbors). The two protest, but the police calmly explain the scene of a crime cannot be disturbed and they must stand back. They then huddle together on the edge of the police line, waiting.

You have to file/transmit your story in 20 minutes. You know you must at least attempt to interview the two. Go ahead....

NOTES

The University of Washington project is a collaboration with the "Victims and the Media Program" of the College of Communication Arts and Sciences, Michigan State University.

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[18] Albert D Talbott. William J. Zima and Ruth McCorkle. "A News Game Called TRIO: A Task for Reporting, Interviewing and Observing," paper presented in the Newspaper Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. San Diego. August. 1974. ERIC. ED 095 564.

[19] Richard Peters. "Modeling to Enhance Critical Thinking and Decision Making Skills Development in the Instruction Process: The Social Studies."a compilation of presentations during 19087 at various conferences on critical thinking and decision making. ERIC. ED 287 781.

[20] One female student took part in all of the exercises. The other person was played either by another woman or the male student. depending on who was available.

[21] The scenario was criticized by one instructor who argued that the victims' family members usually would not be left alone by the police. Although the criticism may have merit. our interest was in the learning that results when the student has to talk to someone who is suffering trauma.

[22] Ochberg.

[23] Speakers included Edward Rynearson. M.D.. Psychiatry Department and Separation and Loss Services: John Purrington. director. Separation and Loss: Cindy Sinnema. Separation and Loss: and Billie Lawson. Harborview Medical Center.

[24] The "actors" were not interviewed as a group until February 16. 1995. Each of the three reported reactions informally while the classroom presentations were taking place.

[25] See Carolyn M. Byerly. "An Agenda for Teaching News Coverage of Rape." *Journalism Educator* (Spring. 1994). pp. 59-69

Testing the Essence of McLuhan's Ideas: Linear vs. Mosaic Thought

by

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Testing the Essence of McLuhan's Ideas: Linear vs. Mosaic Thought

Among his many ideas that have influenced two generations of media theorists, Marshall McLuhan postulated that the evolution of mass media technology affects how people think. Central to many of the ideas that emanated from his "medium is the message" concept was his belief that the development of electronic media — television specifically — changed the thought patterns of people in Western cultures.

McLuhan theorized that societies which had relied on the print media from the time of Guttenberg had acquired a linear thinking skills. People in those societies were conditioned by the print media to think in sequences, as one letter and one word follows another on the printed page. However, McLuhan wrote, the advent of television altered thought patterns in Western societies from sequential to mosaic, the capacity to connect electronic dots on a screen to form a whole picture or visual message.

He reasoned that young people would be most affected by the change from sequential to mosaic thought because they were educated more by television than by print. Implications of this change in thought patterns would have significant and potentially negative effects on their attention span, their perception and their world view, McLuhan said.

The difference between linear and mosaic thinking, according to Hall (1976) is a central and recurring theme in McLuhan's writing. But like so many of McLuhan's other conjectures, the linear versus mosaic thought dyad has never been tested. This research attempts to test McLuhan's theory of linear versus mosaic thought on a convenience sample of young adults, all of whom have spent more hours with television than with the print media (Schramm, et al., 1961).

This investigation reviews McLuhan's writings on the issue of linear versus mosaic thought, and tests whether his implications can be supported. Its dependent variable, suggested by McLuhan himself as a test of the precept of mosaic thought, is the ability to recognize images in abstract art. Independent variables include mass media use at several stages in an adolescent's development, cognitive processes that differentiate reliance on print or visual stimuli, and attribute characteristics of the subjects tested.

Review of Literature

The concept of linear versus mosaic thought is well documented by Marshall McLuhan, by biographers and McLuhan analysts, and by mass media theory text authors.

McLuhan included the concept in his early work (1962) portraying linear thought stemming from print media that leads to processing ideas one at a time. The print media impose "a particular logic on the organization of visual experience." Schramm (1973) interpreted McLuhan's view of print as leading "us to break down reality into discrete units, logically and causally related, perceived linearly."

"Mosaic thought," McLuhan wrote in 1962, is the ability to "understand complex information quickly and simultaneously." These differences in thought processing are attributed to television being a cool or low-definition medium that requires heavy involvement from the viewer to complete the mosaic picture.

McLuhan wrote in Understanding Media, 1964: "The television image offers some three million dots per second to the receiver. From these he accepts only a few dozen each instant, from which to make an image...the viewer of the television mosaic, with technical control of the image unconsciously refigures the dots into an abstract work of art...." The theme of viewers connecting dots of light on television screens to create images was central enough to include in McLuhan's obituary (Whitman 1981). Whether McLuhan intended his connect-the-dots statement literally or as part of his guileful writing style (Gallo, 1985), there is little doubt McLuhan believed that television images demand viewer participation.

Because the linear versus mosaic thought concept deals with differences in cognitive styles, McLuhan and his disciples were interested in the associated theories of brain dominance. Kidder (1989) wrote that individuals dominated by the right side of the brain were expected to be artistic or mosaic in nature; those dominated by the left were rational or linear. Reader's Digest (1988) said that right brain dominance is supposed to produce spatial and holistic thinkers who are artistic and intuitive while left brain dominance is considered oriented toward logic and language.

McLuhan (1978) wrote: "Because the dominant feature of the left hemisphere is linearity and sequentiality, there are good reasons for calling it the 'visual' (quantitative) side of the brain; and because the dominant features of the right hemisphere are the simultaneous, holistic and synthetic, there are good reasons for indicating it as the 'acoustic' (qualitative) side of the brain." He attributed brain dominance to environmental factors because societies without a phonetic alphabet exhibit mosaic thinking patterns (1978), and that the phonetic alphabet contributed to the ascendancy of the left (lineal) hemisphere.

Carrying the point further, McLuhan wrote that African American's are more attuned to mosaic thought. McLuhan and Fiore (1968) wrote that Negro jazz "is directly related to speech rhythms rather than to any printed page or score. Primitive, tactile art and kinetically charged rhythms in music and painting alike are the normal modes of any non-literate world."

Later brain hemispherisity studies using EEG readings and alpha wave analysis were applied to gender. Although these studies (Ray, et al., 1976) seemed to show that men and women process information differently and at different speeds, neither gender was necessarily prone to left or right brain dominance.

But the implications of cognitive learning styles, according to Duffy (1969) are most far-reaching for all young people who, because of their extensive exposure to television, can process visual components faster and more accurately than their print-age counterparts to "discern patterns and processes rather than individual components."

McLuhan (1969) said that the electronic age children are becoming mosaic thinkers. "Young people who have experienced a decade of TV...have naturally imbibed an urge towards involvement in depth that makes all the remote and visualized goals of visual culture seem not only unreal but irrelevant, and not only irrelevant but anemic."

Researchers in several disciplines, including journalism (Vannatta, 1981), investigated the implications of cognitive styles, but McLuhan correctly predicted that the field of education would be most concerned about the learning styles exhibited by the television generation of youngsters. Henahan (1990) credited McLuhan with forecasting how mosaic thought would change education: "Because television devotees are accustomed to the exciting and rapidly changing images of television, they are most comfortable with a fragmented, nonlinear style of presentation which is quite different from the presentation of the traditional print media."

Extensive research and commentary on cognitive styles with an eye toward McLuhan's prophecies has taken place in the education field. Pezdek et al. (1984) found that television comprehenders use visual information to generate concepts, a process that has no counterpart in reading. Attention was greater for text, but memory and comprehension was better for television. According to Solomon (1985), the process of reading is "an isolated, silent, slow, linear, sequential process. Educators warn that too much dependence on textbooks and printed matter will prepare students for the centralized, synchronized, lineal society of America's past."

Cremin (1990) said that the linear versus mosaic concept is still relevant today. He urged educators to strive for a wholeness of understanding of related topics writing that the field should, "do away once and for all with historic splits between head and heart and technique and meaning."

Indeed, empirical research by Harrison (1980) suggests that television viewing is inversely related to reading skills and verbal fluency, and that television viewing actually results in a deterioration of verbal fluency. McLeod and Chaffee (1972) reported that school grade point averages were positively correlated with news reading and television public affairs viewing, but were negatively correlated with overall time spent watching television.

Marshall McLuhan enjoyed a huge, popular following during the 1960s and 1970s, but many of his ideas were untestable. Those that were, failed empirical investigations leaving McLuhan "just another grand theorist whose ideas were overly speculative and empirically unverifiable," (Baran and Davis, 1995). On the other hand, some theorists (Severin & Tankard, 1988) speculate that McLuhan's critics tested only for short-term effects and that his ideas are being taken more seriously now than when they were proposed.

Hypotheses

The extensive body of literature that has emanated during more than thirty years from McLuhan's ideas on linear versus mosaic thought leads to the following hypotheses for this study:

1. Individuals whose media orientation is non-print (mosaic) will be able to identify significantly more abstract art images than will those whose media orientation is print (linear).

2. The ability to identify abstract art images is inversely correlated with age.

3. African Americans will be able to identify significantly more abstract art images than non-African Americans.

4. Neither gender, ACT score, college major, nor parental education level will have an affect on the ability to identify abstract art images.

Operational definitions for the terms used in these hypotheses are defined in the methodology section of the study.

Methodology

This study is a continuation of a project conceived in 1990, tested and refined in 1991, and tested on a large sample in 1995, the results of which are reported here for the first time.

Two key issues in approach required extensive design planning: 1) developing measures to distinguish whether a person has a print or non-print media orientation, and 2) identifying a variable to test mosaic versus linear thinking ability.

The first of these design problems was solved through an extensive analysis of the interrelationship among measures (Stone & Howe 1992). Four measures were tested and yielded satisfactory levels of correlation and predictability in distinguishing print from non-print orientation.

The strongest of the media orientation measures was a single question asking: "When you were young, say ages 8-12, how often did you read books for pleasure?" Responses were: very frequently, (28%); frequently, (28%); sometimes, (28%); and seldom, (16%), with a range of 4 to 1 respectively, a mean of 2.7 and standard deviation 1.1. Higher scores indicated greater print orientation.

Pierce (1983) noted that book reading is a discriminating variable in media orientation as the number of books read per month correlates positively with writing ability and negatively with television viewing hours. The influence of parents on their children's media use fostered a theory of modeling (Chaffee, McLeod & Atkin, 1971; Clarke, 1965; Newspaper Advertising Bureau, 1980; Stone & Wetherington, 1979) that suggests a youngster is likely to adopt the media orientation of parents. Thus, parental orientation may be a mitigating factor in a young adult's media orientation.

The book reading item had been shown to be sufficiently potent to be used alone or in conjunction with one other measure to distinguish print from non-print orientation. However, to thoroughly test the study's hypotheses, three additional measures were included in the investigation:

2) When you were a teenager, say ages 13-17, and had free time after school or on weekends, how often did you engage in each of the following types of activities: (print media) read a newspaper or magazine; read books other than for schoolwork; (non-print) go to the mall; watch TV; talk on the phone; listen to records tapes or the radio.

Dimmick et al. (1979) charted mass media use among adolescents and determined that television use peaks at age 12, when teens increase their use of more social media such as movies, records and radio. Other researchers (Cobb, 1986; Schramm, Lyle & Parker, 1961; Smith, 1989) also have studied the development of media use habits from early childhood through adulthood and have discussed the ebb and flow of interest in different media.

The variable coding (originally a 1-5 point scale with 5 as most frequent), was transformed giving non-print media negative scores and resulting in a range of from -18 to 1 with a mean of -9 and a standard deviation of 3.7. A higher score on the combined teen media use frequency scale indicated greater print media use.

3) A series of nine true-false items adapted from a study on imagery and verbal habits (Paivio & Harshman 1983):

> I spend little time attempting to increase my vocabulary.
> I often have ideas that I have trouble expressing in words.
> My dreams are extremely vivid.
> I have some difficulty expressing myself in writing.
> I enjoy visual arts, such as paintings, more than reading.
> It doesn't really bother me when a word is used improperly.
> My grades have been hampered by inefficient reading.
> I very frequently rely on mental pictures to solve problems.
> My powers of imagination are much higher than average.

Statements similar to these have been used by other researchers attempting to measure brain hemispheric differences. For instance, the mental image parallels O'Brien's (1989) statement: "When trying to remember something, it helps me to get a picture of it in my head."

For this series of nine statements, each "false" answer was coded 2 and indicated a print orientation; each "true" answer was coded 1 and indicated a non-print orientation. Scores ranged from 4 to 17 with a mean of 13 and standard deviation of 1.9. Higher scores meant greater print orientation.

4) How many hours, of 100 hours of leisure-time activity during a vacation week, will you spend on each of the following: (print) reading the newspaper; reading magazines; reading books for pleasure; writing letters; (non-print) going to movies; watching television, both cable and non-cable; viewing video tapes?

Hours devoted to each medium were converted to a percentage of all hours allotted (to avoid errors by subject's in totaling 100 hours). Time allotted to print media was coded positive; time to non-print was coded negative so higher scores indicated print orientation. The range was -.88 to +.70, with a mean of -.18 and standard deviation of .30.

The second design problem, identifying a variable that might test mosaic versus linear thinking ability, was suggested by McLuhan himself. Even from his early works, McLuhan (1962) refers to abstract art as sense interplay inviting the viewer to participate in the art process itself. He compared (1964) mosaic thought with a television viewer's ability to configure "the dots into an abstract work of art on the pattern of a Seurat or a Roualt."

This study adopted the idea that the ability to discern images in abstract art is a measure of McLuhan's mosaic thinking concept. Slides were made of sixteen abstract art paintings from a variety of artists including Severini, Turner, Seurat, Dali, Soutine, Picasso, etc., (see Appendix).

Subjects were a carefully selected, large convenience sample. They were students in two lecture sections of a university art appreciation class, one of the required fine arts options in the general education curriculum. The choice to use these courses was practical, in that the slides shown and the 10-minute debriefing lecture on visual perception given after the experiment were related to art appreciation topics. Additionally, by doing the experiment in a course required by all university students, the study avoided interpretation difficulties experienced by Combs et al. (1988) who used a similar research tactic but suspected their journalism student-laden sample influenced results.

Two sections of the art appreciation course, each of which enrolled some 200 students, met for 50 minutes on the same day in the same 300-seat audio-visual lecture hall, one at 11 a.m. and one at 1 p.m. The course instructor permitted the classes to participate in the study after reviewing the survey and experimental instruments. The experiment took place on Jan. 26, 1995, and was administered by the author to a final usable sample 250 totaling students.

Subjects were told they would be participating in an experiment about art and were given a two-page survey instrument that included the media use and attribute independent variables. After 10 minutes, the slide experiment was introduced. The classes were told they would be viewing 16 slides of abstract art paintings, and that each painting slide would be followed by a multiple-choice question slide.

Students were told not to guess. They were warned to check the "not sure" answer on their questionnaire form unless they definitely saw the image depicted on the abstract art slide. This warning was reinforced by informing subjects that wrong answers counted against correct answers, and that a good score on the experiment might be getting only two or three right answers.

The lights were dimmed in the lecture hall, and an example slide was shown of "Woman with Mandolin" by Braque. The multiple-choice question slide followed the example: "This painting is: a. cat with whiskers; b. sand castle; c. woman with mandolin; d. map of Egypt." The example was reviewed, showing subjects the image of a female face and torso holding a stringed instrument, and the correct answer. The experiment continued through the set of 16 abstract art slides, each shown for seven-to-10 seconds, interspersed with multiple-choice answer slides shown for about five-to-seven seconds.

As a partial control for previous familiarity with abstract art, subjects were asked to write the name of the painter if they recognized the work. Five percent identified one painter, and another 2 percent identified two painters correctly, primarily Dali and Picasso. Thus, the subjects may be said to have little or no previous experience with abstract art, certainly not enough to attribute scores to past familiarity. In fact, those subjects correctly naming two artists scored significantly lower on identifying the slide images ($p < .05$).

A 10-minute debriefing session on visual perception and McLuhan's ideas about linear and mosaic thought followed the experiment, and then the slides were reviewed to provide the correct answers.

An experiment of this sort deserves some subjective assessment to gauge its internal validity. Actually, this administration was the fourth use of the materials. A pre-test with 25 subjects and a full administration to 100 subjects had been conducted at a different university in 1991 on students in a mass communication course, and an administration to 150 students at the same institution and in the same lecture hall had been conducted in 1993 on students in a radio-television class. So the experimental procedures had been well rehearsed prior to this 1995 administration.

Still, many of the same difficulties occurred in conducting the current study. For instance, if the slides remained on the screen too long, one or more subjects was likely to guess at the image aloud. This was met by a plea for quiet and a slightly faster pace in showing the slides. Even if audible guesses occurred twice during the experiment, the scores were not greatly affected because subjects as a whole did very poorly on the slide scores.

Guessing was the single greatest problem in all administrations of the experiment, despite warning subjects not to guess. With only four multiple-choice answers listed for each slide, guessing might have resulted in getting four correct answers in a set of 16 merely by chance. To neutralize lucky guesses, the number of wrong answers for the 16 slides was subtracted from the number of correct answers. Guessing was so prevalent that the sample had a large percentage of negative scores which were converted to positive scores by adding 10 points to all scores. The formula for scoring was: 10+ (correct answers – incorrect answers).

The resulting set of computed scores ranged from 0 to 22 with a mean of 11, suggesting that even after applying the formula, the average correct image identification was a single slide. Still, the computation punishes guessing and is believed to have produced an accurate measure of determining if the subject actually saw the image in the abstract art slide.

The four measures of media orientation were tested for their interrelationship with a correlation procedure shown in Table 1. The four variables were significantly although weakly related, suggesting that they measure slightly different aspects of media orientation. Factor analysis (no table shown) provided a single-factor solution explaining 39 percent of the variance, with adolescent book reading as the principal and single significant variable. This further suggests that the four variables are interrelated along a single dimension, but that each may be measuring a slightly different aspect of the media orientation concept.

Hypothesis 1 was tested initially with multiple regression using the four media orientation variables. Tested in this manner, the series of variables failed to predict slide scale scores, and none of the variables reached significance. However, with simple correlation analysis matching the slide scale score against each of the four measures independently, only the cognitive styles variable (brain hemispherisity) was significantly correlated, and this variable evidenced a negative .17 correlation, significant at $p \leq .01$, indicating that right-brain dominance or the visual cognitive style predicted slide scale scores. None of the three more direct measures of media use correlated with the slide image score.

As an internal validity check, subjects in one of the classes were asked a self-appraisal question immediately after the slide experiment: "Generally speaking, would you classify yourself as a visual or print media person...that is, do you process information better through the written word or through pictures and sound?" Seventy-three subjects said they were visual and scored 12.2 on the slide image test; 32 subjects said they were both (or unsure) and averaged 11.7 on the slide test; and the 25 subjects who were print-oriented averaged a 10.2 score on the slide test. Although the differences in means do not reach statistical significance, they support the cognitive styles finding.

Based on these outcomes, McLuhan's theory about linear versus mosaic thought — at least in terms of brain hemispherisity or cognitive styles —

appears to be supported by the data. However, McLuhan's premise about print media versus non-print media, is not supported by the data presented here.

Hypothesis 2, that the ability to identify abstract art images is inversely correlated with age, is not supported by the data (see Table 2). Although the relationship between age and slide image score is negative, it is not statistically significant. This finding, however, may be a result of the truncated range of ages found in a freshman-sophomore sample. McLuhan's prediction was a contrast between young people and older adults in the early stages of television's development. This study's sample is composed primarily of subjects in their 20s after another 30 years of television's influence. A true test of this aspect of McLuhan's theory may no longer be possible in American society.

Hypothesis 3, dealing with race, was not supported (see Table 3). Caucasians actually scored slightly higher than African Americans on identifying the images in the abstract art slides, negating the possibility that ancestry in non-print cultures affects later generations.

Hypothesis 4 tested gender, school performance through self-reported ACT scores, college major, and the education level of a subject's most educated parent. These attribute variables have been mentioned in the literature with mixed or no effects found for them. Testing them here was another attempt to eliminate possible intervening demographic variables that might explain a subject's ability to identify the slide images. The data (tables 2 and 3) show that no relationship exists between these factors and a subject's ability to discern images in abstract art, so the hypothesis of no effects is supported.

Conclusions

This study, which attempted to test Marshall McLuhan's central theory of mosaic versus linear thought, partially supported the concept. Media orientation, defined here as a person's interest in and use of print or non-print media, was not predictive of mosaic thought, tested by the ability to correctly identify images in abstract art.

However, an adapted version of a visual versus imagery scale, used here as a left brain-right brain hemispherisity test, did predict ability to discern images in abstract art slides. Subjects with visual or right-brain dominance scored significantly higher on the slide test. The outcome supports McLuhan's predictions about brain hemispherisity and visual acuity.

The study negates McLuhan's suggestion that racial ancestry affects mosaic versus linear thought. And, while a truncated range of ages limited the validity of the outcome in this study, age was not inversely related to ability to discern images in the slides as McLuhan had predicted during the first generation of television viewing.

Demographic variables, which have previously failed to account for differences in cognitive styles, also failed to predict abstract art slide scores in this study.

In all, this investigation suggests that Marshall McLuhan's essential theory about mosaic versus linear thought patterns is not without merit. His prophecies about print and non-print media — the more practical predictions for mass media influences — were not supported in this study, but his conjectures about cognitive styles do appear to deserve further research rather than being rejected as the speculations of a grand theorist whose ideas are not verifiable.

Ferguson (1991) notes of McLuhan that two decades of technological innovation "have offered some apparent confirmation of his divinations...the 'prophet of global speak' is ripe, if not for resurrection, at least for reappraisal." Finding support for McLuhan's brain hemispherisity hypothesis, this study is among recent inquiries that encourage an empirical retrospective of his ideas.

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Table 1: Intercorrelations among media orientation predictor measures

	Cognitive Style	Media Use as Teen	Media Hours as Adult
Book Reading as Adolescent	.20** (n=294)	.25*** (n=224)	.21** (n=191)
Cognitive Style		.15* (n=225)	.11 (n=192)
Media Use as Teen			.14* (n=173)

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* p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

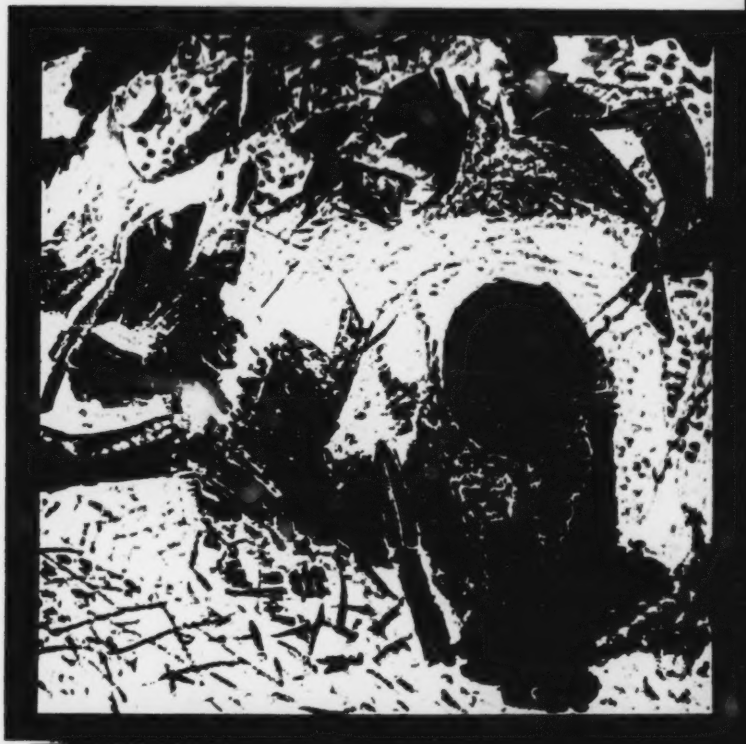
Table 2: Hypothesis testing by correlational analysis

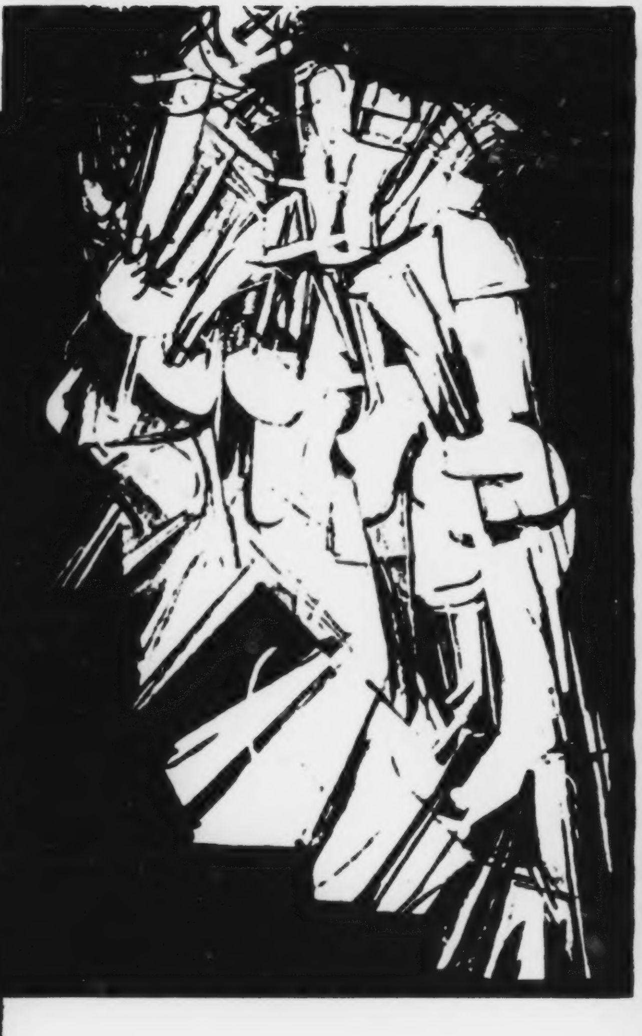
	Slide Scale Score
Media orientation:	
Cognitive style	-.17**
Media hours as an adult	.08
Media use as a teen	-.06
Book reading as an adolescent	-.08
Age:	-.07
ACT Score:	.02

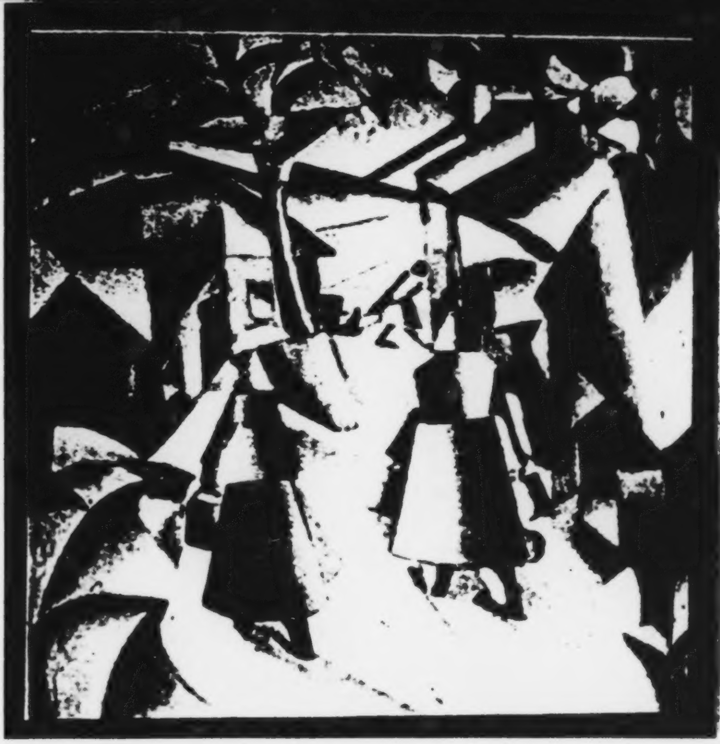
** p < .01

Table 3: Hypothesis testing by analysis of variance

	Slide Scale Score			
	N	Mean	F	p
College major:	243	11.2	.39	n.s.
journalism	8	10.9		
other liberal arts	57	11.3		
science/engineering	57	11.0		
business	32	11.3		
education	12	12.0		
other/undecided	67	10.8		
Race:	240	11.2	.08	n.s.
Caucasian	167	11.2		
African American	52	11.0		
Other	22	11.0		
Parent's education level:	243	11.2	.17	n.s.
Below college	74	11.1		
Some college	56	11.4		
College graduate	56	11.3		
Post graduate	57	11.0		
Gender (t-test):	243	11.2	t=.02	n.s.
males	138	11.2		
females	105	11.2		







APPENDIX

These are six of the abstract art slides used in the experiment to test subjects' ability to identify images. These black-and-white photographs may show images better than the full-color slides that were projected during the experiment. They range in difficulty from some of the more readily identified slides to some of the most difficult. Answers are on the next page.

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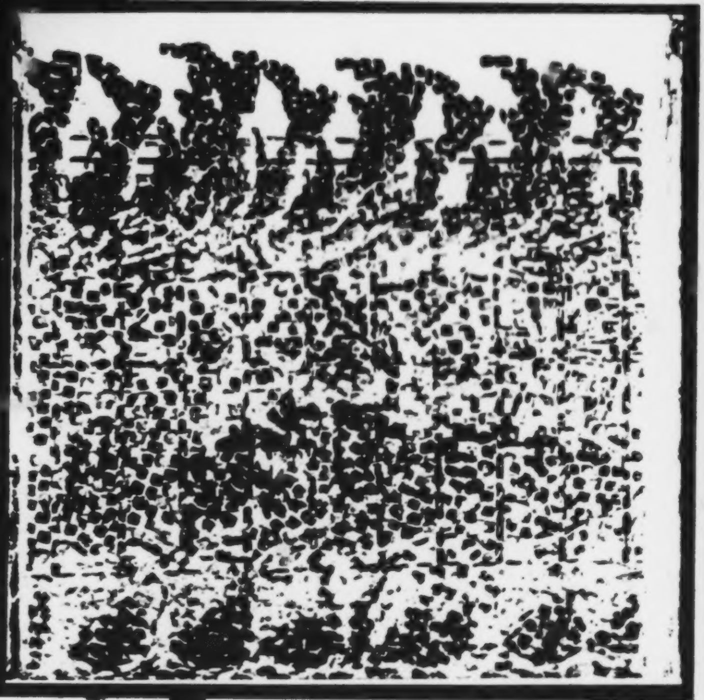
ANSWERS, this page: 1) middle photo is a repeated image of a woman running; 2) lower left, focus on the mast in "fire at sea"; 3) upper left, at the top of the print, turned sideways is the number 15 on the back of a racer hunched over a bicycle, called "the cyclist" — the most difficult photo in the set.



ANSWERS, previous page: 1) upper left is "street pavers," a man in a hat is bent over repairing the street with a pick; 2) upper right, "nude descending staircase"; 3) lower left, two figures walking toward a village carrying pails in each hand.

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Framing the Flood of '93: A Comparison of Newspaper and Television Frames with Citizen Perceptions and Preferences

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Abstract

Applications of framing theory, which focuses on prominent thematic meanings in messages, are explored with respect to news coverage of natural disasters. This study examines how newspaper and television news coverage of a major flood was framed. Analyses focused on comparing media framing of the event with the perceptual frames of people who were interviewed after the flood. Specific similarities and differences between media frames and individual media dependencies are noted.

Introduction and Overview

This study is concerned with the relationship between topics and perspectives that characterized newspaper and national television news coverage of the midwest flood of 1993, and the ways that citizens perceived the event. To examine this relationship, the study compares the patterns revealed by prior content analyses of newspaper and television news coverage of the '93 flood to responses measured in a large-scale survey of Missouri residents about eight months after the last of the flood waters receded, but during a time when there was a threat of renewed flooding.

The study relies on four basic concepts about the relationship between media content and people's perceptions. The first concept is that topics are "framed" when they are discussed in the news; that is, they are presented in a particular context and with particular emphases (e.g., Neuman, Just & Crigler, 1992). The second concept involves a revised version of agenda setting that suggests that salient topics and the way they are framed by a medium influence the way that those who consume that medium perceive the topics (e.g., Wanta & Hu, 1994). The third concept is derived from the cultivation literature and has to do with the idea that the more consumption one does of a single news medium, the more one's perceptual world (sometimes referred to as one's social reality) will match the world as represented in that medium (e.g., Morgan & Signorelli, 1990). The fourth concept is that people are active processors of the media, that is, they bring to the news their own beliefs, orientations, perceptions, and frames that are derived from idiosyncratic experiences. As active processors, people will not necessarily show frames of an event like a flood that perfectly match the frames in the medium they primarily consume. Rather, they will show some consistent patterning, but the media-frame to person-frame match will be far from perfect (e.g., Neuman, Just & Crigler, 1992).

In the paper, we look first at the details of the '93 midwest flood, at the role and nature of frames in news, at various views of media dependency and its relationship to agenda setting, and at some important general features of risk communication that occurs during disasters. We then summarize what is known about frames used in news about the great flood. Finally, we articulate an informal model of how media frames would be expected to relate to frames held by consumers of those media. Two general hypotheses generated by this model are then tested.

The Midwest Flood of 1993

During the summer of 1993, residents in eight states in the Upper Mississippi basin endured a flood that would turn out to be one of the worst weather related natural disasters in the history of the United States. The Great Flood of '93, as it has come to be called, caused $15-20 billion of property damage, second only to Hurricane Andrew as a weather-related natural disaster. In addition, it caused thousands of people to be evacuated from their homes, and it disrupted a significant portion of the country's transportation system for several weeks (Koenig, 1993).

The flood started with spring rains and the melting of northern snows, then receded, and was brought back with a vengeance by heavy rains in late June and July. The flooding ruined crops, destroyed thousands of levees in the upper Mississippi basin, infiltrated water treatment plants, and swept away countless roads, bridges, railroads and buildings. Missouri was hit hardest with deaths (43), but the devastation was widespread throughout Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska, Wisconsin, Minnesota, South Dakota, and Kansas as well. According to National Weather Service Director Elbert Friday, "Every major river in Iowa and Missouri was in a stage of either record or major flooding" (Koenig, 1993, 1-A).

The idea that major disasters become major news stories (particularly in the country in which they occur) may be indicative of enduring news values (c.f. Gans, 1979). Memorable disaster images are routinely found in print and television news stories (e.g., a car stuck on a bridge after the 1989 San Francisco earthquake or the overhead shots of flattened neighborhoods following Hurricane Andrew). Most natural disasters, including blizzards, tornadoes, flash floods, hurricanes and earthquakes, however, strike quickly, often with little or no advance warning. In contrast, a flood of the magnitude of the Flood of '93 does not occur in an instant or even in a few days.[1] This flood occupied much of the summer, a situation which resulted in the news media having more time to cover the disaster as it was occurring and giving audiences a longer time in which to absorb information, and, as we will argue, be influenced by the frames overlaid on the event.

At issue in this study, however, is not whether news organizations and audiences deem disasters to be important events, but how meaning is constructed from communications about them. One way in which this process is examined is through the use of frames analysis, a technique that focuses on underlying, but prominent semantic meanings in communications, and which is increasingly being applied in agenda-setting research (e.g. Iyengar, 1990, 1991; Iyengar & Simon, 1993; Neuman, Just & Crigler, 1992). In essence, through the use of content analysis data from newspaper and network television news coverage of the Flood of '93 and post-flood survey data, this study will examine the effects of news media framing of flood coverage on the frames that individuals hold in their interpretations of issues relating to the flood. In addition, variations in how individuals experienced the flood might also be expected to affect their perceptions of it as an event; in effect, people who relied primarily on news coverage for their information about the flood might well have a different understanding of it as an event than those who were directly affected by the flood. As such, differences in individual media dependencies might also be related to differences in how individuals frame their own perceptions of the flood.

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[1] In disaster typology, the Flood of '93 would be classified as a level four (on a five point scale) gradual onset natural disaster with a prolonged, continuous impact and cumulative threat (Dynes, 1970).

Frames in News Discourse

There is a growing area of research in mass communications that deals with the concept of frames in news coverage. Framing analysis has consistently emphasized that the broader meanings of news messages are not only found in their explicit content, but are also an implicit result of how such stories are told (Pan & Kosicki, 1993). In a frames analysis, meaning is conceptualized as frequently existing on more than one level. On the surface level, meaning comes from the message itself. On an underlying (or perhaps overriding) level, however, meaning in messages is also derived from "contextual cues" (Iyengar 1991) and salient features that may not be evident at the message surface level. Swanson and Neuman posit that "news stories, like other media texts, are polysemic, that they offer not a transparent, unitary meaning but rather complex resources that require interpretation and can support multiple meanings" (1994, p. 3).

Although some of the key applications of framing analysis have focused on news coverage of political issues (e.g. Iyengar, 1990, 1991; Neuman, Just & Crigler, 1992), frame analysis is equally well-suited to coverage of natural disasters. There are at least three important reasons for this suitability. First, traditional news values such as timeliness, impact or consequence, human interest and conflict (Hough, 1988) are criteria easily met by most natural disasters, which, not surprisingly, leads to a good deal of coverage for major domestic natural disasters. Second, disasters are inherently dramatic events that occur within a specific time frame and can be covered from a variety of angles. Although the Flood of '93 took place over a period of several weeks, while most other natural disaster events occur in a much shorter time frame, it was still an event bounded by time. And although individuals may have already developed schemas about natural disasters, eliciting information and perceptions that readers' and viewers' have regarding a specific event should satisfy a temporal order criterion that is necessary in effects studies. Finally, although the majority of readers and viewers may not have direct personal experience with disasters, the compelling nature of disasters and their widespread coverage by news media ensures that most people have some familiarity with learning about disasters through the news media.

Conceptualizations of frames are rooted in both sociological and psychological theory (Pan & Kosicki, 1993). Frames are closely linked to the ideas of schemas and scripts as cognitive structures that aid in the organization of knowledge in memory, the construction of meaning, and that influence inferencing (Goffman, 1974; Bower, Black & Turner, 1979; Gitlin, 1980; Kahnemann & Tversky, 1984; Gamson, 1988). Across an increasingly wide range of studies examining frames in news discourse, several variations in how "frames" are operationalized can be found. Gamson defines frames as the focus of concern or controversy that "suggests what the issue is about" (1988, p. 165), which can be found in discourse by locating the "central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning" (Gamson & Modigliani, 1987, p. 143). Pan and Kosicki conceptualize the term frame "as a cognitive device used in information encoding, interpreting, and retrieving; it is communicable" (1993, p. 57).

Influential research by Graber (1988), Iyengar (1991) and Neuman, Just and Crigler (1992) has advanced the use of frames analysis in mass communication research. Graber applies the concept of frames as "thinking categories." Iyengar approaches frames as subtle differences in the way information is presented and embedded in "contextual cues," which are often correlated with differences in audiences' evaluations of issues dealt with in news coverage of political and social issues. Iyengar maintains that television coverage of these issues contain either individual or social responsibility frames. Further, emphases in television content result in different frame orientations.

Episodic frames simply report events as they occur over time. Schematic frames are context-based and provide explanation and comparison with some prototype or schema. Neuman, Just and Crigler define frames as "conceptual tools which media and individuals rely on to convey, interpret, and evaluate information" (1992, p. 60), and which serve an important function as simplifying representations that help place the complex and sometimes conflicting information found in many news stories in a "broader social and historical context" (1992, p. 143).

Entman (1993) pointed out that those who analyze the content of news stories only in terms of counting the positive and negative views expressed are neglecting to measure the salience of these views and how they interconnect to create a dominant impression, theme or focus. Similarly, Pan and Kosicki concluded that content analyses that focus only on the length and location of news stories, or again, the number of pro and con arguments they make, are likely to miss "how issues evolve" in political or social discourse (1993, p. 68-70). Both of these reviews have argued, then, that the use of frames as a central tool in any content analysis of mass media messages that seeks to understand the meaning of news texts is important.

In this study, our definition of a frame is essentially a synthesis of some of the various definitions presented above. For us, frames are the prominent themes or meanings within or perceived from a news story as a whole. A frame is not necessarily dependent on the topic of a story as much as it is inferred from its most salient impressions.

As mentioned above, some of the influential studies using framing analysis started within an agenda-setting framework (e.g. Iyengar, 1990, 1991; Iyengar & Simon, 1993; Neuman et al., 1992; Swanson & Neuman, 1994). As originally hypothesized, agenda-setting effects are said to occur as a transfer of salience when issues that have been emphasized and covered prominently in the news media are deemed increasingly important by the public (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Edelstein (1993) argued that future agenda-setting research might be enhanced by conceptualizing thresholds of salience at the level of the problem rather than at the issue or story topic level. The concept of frames which focuses on salient impressions of meaning in discourse rather than discrete topics may be a fruitful approach to examining salience at the level of the problem. Framing analysis within an agenda-setting framework, then, explores the relationships between how issues are framed in news coverage and the frames that individuals use to interpret the same issues.

Results, in the few studies that have taken this approach, have been mixed. For example, while research by Iyengar and associates has generally supported the idea that media frames influence frames held by viewers, studies by Neuman et al. (1992) and Swanson and Neuman (1994) have tended to show that the frames audiences use are independent of and different from news media frames on the same issues. This result we conceptualize as the result of active approaches that people take to processing media content.

One of the key elements in media effects theories is exposure. Although often taken for granted or controlled in individual studies, research within cultivation, persuasion, media dependency, and uses and gratifications theoretical frameworks has frequently found exposure to be a reliable predictor variable for effects. And in agenda-setting research, "studies examining exposure have generally found correlations between level of exposure and strength of agenda-setting effects" (Wanta & Hu, 1994). The degree of exposure an individual has to a particular medium is also an important variable in cultivation research (e.g., Morgan & Signorelli, 1990).

Of the studies that have examined framing at both the content level and the audience level, audience perceptions and content analysis data have been compared, but media use has not usually been treated as a variable. In the multi-method approach used by Neuman et al (1992), exposure was not varied in the experiments with news stories; nor was it directly measured in the survey or depth interview portions of the study. In Iyengar's experiments, exposure has been controlled according to frame types (e.g. Iyengar, 1990). In a study by Iyengar and Simon (1993), however, data from National Election Study surveys included respondents' media use patterns. News coverage of the Gulf Crisis was analyzed for frames that emphasized either a military or a diplomatic response. The military response frame was found to be predominant. When compared with content analysis data from network television news, the survey results indicated "respondents reporting higher rates of exposure to television news expressed greater support for a military as opposed to a diplomatic response to the crisis (framing)" (Iyengar & Simon, 1993, p. 365).

Exposure to Disaster Coverage within a Media Dependency Framework

Ball-Rokeach defines media-system dependency as "a relationship in which the capacity of individuals to attain their goals is contingent upon the information resources of the media system -- those resources being the capacities to (a) create and gather, (b) process, and (c) disseminate information" (1985, p. 487). When an individual's goals or needs for information can only be achieved through some form of mediated communication, a dependency on that specific form(s) of media is theorized as being likely to develop. Likewise, if an individual's goals or needs can be achieved effectively through interpersonal or other nonmediated forms of communication, then a media-system dependency is thought less likely to develop.

In addition to individuals' reliance on the media as sources of information useful to attaining goals, several other conditions may affect the degree or intensity of media dependency. Ball-Rokeach hypothesized that the degree of threat or ambiguity in the social environment is one such primary condition.

Hirschburg, Dillman, and Ball-Rokeach (1986) found evidence of this relationship in a study on media dependency and the eruption of Mount St. Helens. Additional support for the hypothesis that greater degrees of ambiguity and threat lead to more intense media dependencies comes from Loges (1994). Using a survey that included questions on eight types of different man-made and natural hazards, Loges found that higher perceptions of threat were positively correlated with more intense media dependencies, but negatively correlated with the scope (i.e. range of media and individual types of goals for seeking information) of media dependencies. More specifically, with television use, "threat was most strongly related to the self-understanding and action orientation motivations," while for newspaper use, "threat was most powerful as a predictor of self-understanding and interaction orientation" (Loges, 1994, p. 17).

"Though research into media reliance has been extensive, few scholars have attempted to tie reliance to agenda-setting effects" (Wanta & Hu, 1994, p. 91). If, however, different degrees of media dependencies could be isolated based on these kinds of variables, then individuals whose primary sources of information about the flood were mass media sources might also be more likely to incorporate frames emphasized in the news coverage in their own perceptions of the flood than individuals who had access to other forms of information about the flood. Wanta and Hu (1994) found at least some initial support for establishing linkages between the agenda-setting and media dependency theoretical frameworks.

Risk Communication During Disasters

As a body of research that has grown out of an interest in social and community responses to crisis, risk communication scholarship focuses on how information about disasters and potential disasters is communicated to the public. Warnings of impending disasters, hazard mitigation, risk assessment and post-disaster evaluation are seen as central components in communication about public risk and disaster events.

Much of the risk communication scholarship on mass media and disasters has been critical of news organizations' portrayal of disasters. Dating back to the sociological origins of disaster research, there has been "a long-standing assumption among disaster researchers that the media are deficient in disaster reporting" (Kreps, 1980). Among the primary criticisms are claims that: (1) the media sensationalize disasters; (2) media coverage of disasters often includes inaccurate information and errors; (3) the media focus primarily on warnings of impending disasters and on the disaster event itself, but provide little contextual analysis of risk and hazard mitigation; and (4) the media perpetuate "myths" of disaster behavior (e.g. Parker, 1980; Drabek, 1986). Myths of disaster behavior include assumptions of mass panic, helpless victims, and a breakdown of social order (Dynes, 1970).

Singer and Endreny summarized the general criticism of sensationalistic disaster coverage and the failure of mass media to place disasters in broader contexts by concluding, "The media do not report on risks; they report on harms" (1987, p. 10). Similarly, the failure by the news media to play a prominent role in hazard mitigation and evaluation is exemplified the conclusion that the media should place more emphasis on "post-disaster activity to determine causes and fix blame and responsibility" (Lang & Lang, 1980, p. 279). Although the performance of the media as a mitigating factor in disasters in terms of long term risk preparedness may be suspect, most disaster researchers have found that the news media do play an important role in issuing warnings to the public when disaster is imminent (e.g., Drabek, 1986; Driscoll & Salwen, 1993; Kreps, 1980; Krimsky & Plough, 1988; Ledingham & Masel-Walters, 1985; Ledingham & Masel-Walters, 1989; Scanlon, 1976; Sood, Stockdale & Rogers, 1987; Spencer, Seydlitz, Laska & Triche, 1992; Turner, 1980; Wenger, James & Faupel, 1980;

Wilkins, 1985; Wilkins & Patterson, 1987). The role of the media in providing mobilizing information has been noted as well (e.g., Garner, 1994; Spencer et al., 1992).

Although much of the literature cited thus far has analyzed the content of media disaster coverage, the primary applied focus of much of the risk communication research has been on news media at the organizational level. In shifting the level of analysis to the individual's construction of meaning, the application of framing analysis to media content and audience perceptions may be helpful.

Disaster news frames have been analyzed, directly or indirectly, in a few studies. In applying the concept of frames to disaster research, some common themes emerge. As Wenger et al. describe, "death, economic loss, human suffering, and social disruption are the standard themes in the media's portrayal of disaster. For the audience, the apparent image is one of total destruction" (1980, p. 253). Wilkins and Patterson propose that what is needed, however, is a "news heuristic for risk" – a political frame that looks at risk as tradeoff between social benefits and harms, that places an emphasis on analyzing the elements of risk, anticipating risk, and providing mobilizing information, and that "views risk not as an event but as a series of related decisions" (1987, p. 91).

In a content analysis of local television and newspaper coverage of a blizzard, Wilkins (1985) found the prominent frames to be crisis and helplessness. In an analysis of Italian newspaper and magazine coverage of a 1966 flood in Florence, Italy, Alexander (1980) found that frames differed between media and between the types of sources quoted in stories. In magazines, the prominent frames were human misery and devastation. In newspaper coverage, conflict and blame were the frames most frequently employed when politicians or experts were quoted in stories; morality was most prominent when ordinary people were quoted.

Garner (1994) conducted a qualitative content analysis of national and local print media coverage (New York Times, Time, Newsweek, and the Des Moines Register) of the Flood of 1993, the same event analyzed by Thorson and Meeds (1994), Meeds and Thorson (1994), and in this study. Garner found the overriding frame of the flood coverage to be helpless individuals in a battle with Mother Nature, with key subthemes of national and personal cost (the national media tended to emphasize national cost while the local media emphasized personal cost). The local newspaper in the Garner analysis also "provided its readers with a sense of community and a way to cope with the events they faced on a daily basis" (p. 9).

Thorson and Meeds (1994) conducted a content analysis that examined frames occurring in newspaper coverage of the Flood of '93, and Meeds and Thorson (1994) used a similar study design to analyze frames in network television news coverage of the flood. In the newspaper study, flood stories from the St. Louis Post-Dispatch (350,000 plus daily circulation) and the Columbia Missourian (a mid-market newspaper with daily circulation under 10,000) between July 1, 1993 and September 15, 1993 were content analyzed. The two newspapers are located in different sized markets and both newspapers serve readership areas in which some residents were directly affected by the flood. In the study, one frame per news story was identified; news stories in which no particular frame was prominent were coded as being unframed.

The television content analysis examined all the flood stories that were aired by one network's evening news programs during July, 1993 (N = 110, **ABC World News** was selected by random draw). This analysis, differently from the newspaper study, involved coding of multiple frames within a story. With the exception of the morality frame, which was expanded into an overall higher authority frame, all of the frame types from the newspaper study were incorporated into the television coding instrument. Three additional frames were considered as well -- fighting back, warning, and heroism.

Although there were some marked similarities in the frequency of some of the frames used in the two media, there were also some important differences. Looking only the frames that were coded in both studies, the frequencies looked as follows: (It should be kept in mind that the newspaper study unfortunately did not allow for multiple frames within a single story; but that the television study did.)

Newspaper frames and their frequencies:

Economic 17%; (Rank = 1)
Solidarity 11% (Rank = 2)
Blame 9% (Rank = 3)
Prediction 7% (Rank = 4)
Devastation 5% (Rank = 5)
Conflict 2% (Rank = 6)
Helplessness 0% (Rank = 7)

Television frames and their frequencies:

Economic 47% (Rank = 1)
Solidarity 28% (Rank = 4)
Blame 15% (Rank = 6)
Prediction 33% (Rank = 3)
Devastation 25% (Rank = 5)
Conflict 14% (Rank = 7)
Helplessness 46% (Rank = 2)

The similarities and variations in which frames appeared most dominantly in the two provide an interesting opportunity to look at how people who reported different exposure levels to television and newspaper news about the flood would describe their perceptions of the event.

A Model and Two Hypotheses

The basic assumptions in the model suggested here are that (1) people bring to news their own unique frames that are related to their demographic characteristics and their own experience with the flood. (2) Most people have preferences for where they get their information about a disaster such as the flood that affected their state. Some people will predominantly use a single medium; others may use a blend. (3) For those who show a dominant medium use pattern, there will be some significant correlations between media frame use and people's frames. (4) The more exposure people have to news in a single medium, the more closely their frames will match those of that medium.

Based on these four assumptions, the following hypotheses can be derived:

Hypothesis 1: People's perceived importance of various flood topics will differ somewhat from the emphasis those topics received in newspapers and television.

A good example of this kind of finding can be seen in the results reported by Neuman, Just & Crigler (1992, p. 75), who showed the following patterns of media and people frames for the five news topics they examined:

Media frames:

Powerlessness	33%
Human impact	18%
Economics	16%
Moral values	4%
Conflict	29%

People frames:

Powerlessness	22%
Human impact	36%

Economics 21%

Moral values 15%

Conflict 6%

Hypothesis 2: Given that newspaper and television frames in flood coverage differed, it is expected that TV-dependent, newspaper-dependent (as well as radio-dependent citizens and those who depended on "other people" for their flood news) will show frame patterns different from each other and related to the medium from which they predominantly got their flood news.

Hypothesis 3 was based on Assumption 4; that is, that the heavier the exposure an individual has a single medium, the greater the likelihood of a match between their frames and those of the medium.

These hypotheses were tested with data from a state-wide sample of Missourians.

Method

In March, 1994, a stratified random sample of 1950 Missouri residents was interviewed by a professional survey company. The survey was commissioned by the Missouri Department of Health. The sample was proportionate-stratified at the county level, and employed a modified Waksberg design. The Bryant method was used for within-household selection. The telephone survey asked a variety of questions on flood-related issues. Each interview took about 45 minutes and covered socio-demographic status, personal experiences with the floods, levels of concern for hazards of the flood compared to other hazards, perceptions about the role of government, sources and importance of various types of news information, and personal impact of the floods in terms of lifestyle changes, availability of potable water, and illness and injury. There were questions about knowledge of food and water sanitation, mental status, and personal risk taking behaviors. Because of the high mortality rate experienced in

Missouri, questions were chosen which would provide a better understanding of how to prevent future mortality.

Dependent variables: The items used to test "frames" endorsed by respondents are shown in the Appendix. As can be seen, there were questions that asked how important news was about the economic impact of the flood, stories about how people helped each other ("solidarity"), stories that placed blame on various organizations or individuals, stories that predicted weather or flood stages, stories that showed flood devastation, and stories about inter-agency conflicts related to the flood. The "helplessness" frame was tested by asking people two questions about whether the there's any way to avoid floods. A secondary measure of "solidarity" were two items that asked whether people had volunteered or helped with sandbagging.

Predictor variables: Media dependency was indexed in two ways. The most straight-forward index asked people what their primary source of information was during the flood. Whatever news medium they chose was considered their "dominant medium." A second index asked people which medium they used to get eight categories of flood information. Their TV-dependency score was then defined as the sum of times they answered TV. Their newspaper-dependency score was the sum of times they answered newspaper, and so on. These scores were then categorized as high, medium, and low for each of the three media and the "other people" source. Thus, everyone had a score for each of the four sources of information.

Results

Descriptive attributes of the data

In response to the single question about source dependency during the flood, most people responded television (78%), with fewer responding radio (12%), newspaper (6%), and other people (4%). Television remained the dominant response for the questions about sources for news about specific flood information.

Table 1 shows the percent of people who indicated that each kind of flood information was "very or somewhat important."

Table 1: Percent of people indicating that each frame was "very or somewhat important"

Economic	57%
Solidarity	76%
Blame	21%
Prediction	66%
Devastation	70%
Conflict	52%
Helplessness	63%

Tests of the hypotheses

H1 suggested that people's perceived importance of various flood topics would differ somewhat from the emphasis those topics received in newspapers and television. This hypothesis was tested using the first categorization of media dependency, that is, what medium people said was their dominant source of flood news. Figure 1 compares newspaper and TV frames to TV dependents, and Figure 2 compares the media frames to newspaper-dependents. As can be seen, the most important topic for both TV- and newspaper dependents was solidarity, followed by devastation. Both TV and newspapers had economic frames as most frequent. Newspapers had solidarity second, but TV had solidarity considerably lower. People also differed on the importance of blame from newspapers which had it third. It was lowest for people, and fairly low for television. Helplessness was also high for both TV and people, but not for newspapers.

As can be seen, then, Hypothesis 1 was supported. Although there were some consistencies in how important people considered flood information like solidarity stories, prediction, and conflict, for other topics there were greatly different patterns for people and the media they consumed (see listing of ranks in Figures 1 and 2).

Hypothesis 2 suggested that TV-dependent, newspaper-dependent, radio-dependent, and those who relied on other people for their flood information would show frame patterns different from each other, but related to the medium from which they predominantly got their flood news. Table 2 shows the ratings of "very and somewhat important" for each of the topics plus percent who agree with the helplessness items 2D and 2E. (There were so few "other people" dependent individuals that they are not reported.)

As can be seen, TV-dependent are higher than newspaper-dependent for conflict, prediction, devastation. TV-dependent are lower for blame, and the same for solidarity, conflict and helplessness. Radio dependent people sometimes seemed to match newspaper dependent (e.g., in solidarity), sometimes matched TV-dependent (e.g., economic and prediction frames), but also sometimes showed different patterns altogether (e.g., devastation and conflict frames).

Although these percentages provide a gross comparison of the frames used by different individuals, the number of frames examined is so small that statistics cannot be used. To examine the relationships predicted in Hypothesis 3, we therefore turned to a different analysis strategy to delve more analytically into these apparent differences.

In this analysis, we cross-tabbed dominant medium with the levels of agreement with each of the flood topic importance items. This analysis yielded four frames that showed significant ($p < .05$) chi squares.

In Table 3 it can be seen that media dependency produced a differential agreement with the "only have selves to blame" frame. Here, 18% of TV-dependents and 20% of the Radio-dependents strongly or somewhat agreed with the statement, but 28% of newspapers agreed. There was, then, a clearly stronger orientation toward blame, at least as measured in this way, for newspaper readers.

Table 4 shows that media dependency produced a differential agreement with the "importance of pictures of devastation." As can be seen, TV-dependents, newspaper-dependents, and other-people-dependents all reported about the same level of importance (90%, 88%, 86%), but radio-dependents were lower (81%).

Table 5 shows that media dependency was differentially associated with ratings of the "importance of economics." TV-dependents and radio-dependents showed about the same level of importance (58% and 55%, respectively, said important or somewhat important), but newspaper-dependents and other-people-dependents were lower (47% and 46%, respectively, said important or somewhat important).

Finally, there was also a difference in what people actually volunteered or sandbagged. Table 6 shows that other-people-dependents were more likely to report they had sandbagged than TV-, radio-, or newspaper-dependents.

Hypothesis 3 suggested that the heavier the exposure people had to a single medium, the greater the likelihood of a match between people frames and news medium frames. This hypothesis was tested in two ways. The first involved the same kinds of cross-tabs as used above. The second way involved running a series of analyses of variance wherein the independent variable was level of exposure to the medium (low, medium, and high), and the dependent variables were reported importance of the various kinds of flood news.

Table 7 shows that people who were heavily TV-dependent were less likely to strongly disagree with the statement that people only have themselves to blame. This is consistent with TV-dependents being more blame oriented in the first place, but goes beyond that result, a clear exposure-level effect.

Table 8 shows the percent of low, medium and high newspaper-dependent who considered "news that told people how to help each other" important. People with high levels of exposure to newspapers were less likely than people with low exposure to newspapers to rate news that told people how to help each other (solidarity) as being important.

Table 9 shows that more exposure to TV was associated with both less sandbagging and less volunteering. This is interesting when combined with the fact described above that people who are other-dependent rather than those who were media-dependent, were generally more likely to help others in the flood. It is intriguing to ask whether it might be that the media teach us not to help. Of course, it might be that media consumption simply consumes time that might otherwise be spent helping. These two possible explanations are examined in the discussion.

An ANOVA showed a significant difference (F(2, 1903) = 8.0, p < .0001) in the importance ratings that economics stories received as a function of level of "others" exposure (low = 4.0; medium = 3.6, and high = 3.1; where 4 = very important). What this says is that those who used news sources different from "other people" considered economic news more important than did those who heavily used "other people" as their information source.

Two other ANOVA's showed a relationship between the level of use of radio and "other people" and ratings of the importance of news that showed flood devastation. For radio, there was a significant difference (F(2, 1936) = 8.9, p < .0001) in the importance ratings devastation stories received as a function of level of radio exposure (low = 3.4; medium = 3.2, and high = 3.3; where 4 = very important). Heavy radio users, then, found devastation stories more important than did light users. For others-dependent people, there was a significant difference (F(2, 1934) = 4.0, p < .02) in the importance ratings devastation stories received as a function of level of others exposure (low = 4.1; medium = 3.9, and high = 3.7; where 4 = very important). In contrast to the radio effect, the heavier the use of others, the less important devastation stories were rated.

Finally, level of TV use was significantly related to ratings of importance of conflict stories. There was a significant difference (F(2, 1865) = 4.8, p < .009) in the importance ratings conflict stories received as a function of level of TV exposure (low = 3.7; medium = 3.3, and high = 3.7; where 4 = very important). Interestingly, people with low and high levels of TV exposure both rated conflict stories as more important than did people with medium levels of TV exposure.

Discussion

This study showed the somewhat contradictory findings that (1) people do not always consider the kind of flood news seen most frequently in newspapers and television most important, but that (2) there are differences in ratings of frame importance that link logically with frame patterns exhibited in the media.

For people, solidarity and devastation, two highly "people-oriented" frames, were rated as most important. In contrast, both television and newspapers emphasized stories woven around economic frames. Particularly TV did not emphasize the solidarity frame. Intriguingly, the more exposure people reported to TV flood news, the less likely they were to exhibit solidarity behaviors, i.e., to volunteer or to sandbag. In fact, people who said they used others for their dominant source of flood information were more likely than any of the media-dependent people to show "solidarity" behaviors. Of course, with survey data, it is not possible to ascertain the causal ordering of the relationship. Do people who volunteer use others for their flood information because they are simply around others more and perhaps prefer it that way? Or does using others for information rather than the media lead to more helpful orientations? This issue is an important one, and well-deserving or further research.

At the same time that people did show importance ratings of frames different from what one would expect given the emphasis the media placed on the frames, however, there were also differences in groups of differential media-dependency that seemed generally consistent with the kinds of media frames to which they were getting a lot of exposure. For example, newspaper readers were more willing to place blame, which is consistent with a greater emphasis on blame frames in newspapers than on television. On the other hand, there were some important contradictions. For example, newspaper-dependents rated economic stories as less important than did TV-dependents, even though both newspapers and television used the economic frame most frequently.

Finally, the data reported here provide support for the idea that the more one consumes a particular medium, the more there is a match in media and people frames. Heavier TV-dependents were more likely to rate devastation stories as important--consistent with the emphasis on devastation stories in TV flood news.

Although the general pattern of these results provides some insight into the relationship between how the media "perceive" a slow-onset disaster like a flood and how people perceive that disaster, there are some clear limitations to the data and the analysis presented here. First, the survey was carried out months after the flood was over. It may have been that right after or during the flood, people showed more consistent orientations toward media frames. Second, it is not appropriate to infer media frames cause people frames to look as they do. This is, of course, a classic problem with survey studies of "agenda-setting" relationships. Third, the content analyses of newspapers and television flood coverage were not identical, and so only gross comparisons of the emphasis placed on the various frames can be made. Further, newspapers are clearly "local" media; while the television news was national. We would not expect local and national perspectives to match, regardless of the medium examined. And finally, the survey format did not allow in-depth analysis of the frames people held concerning the flood. Instead, we often had to rely on single items to give us a picture of how important people thought various kinds of flood news was. Single items do not provide depth of measurement, and they are, of course, notoriously unstable.

But in spite of these problems, the present study offers a new look at the role of the media in disasters. Although many criticisms have been leveled at disaster coverage by our media, no one has pointed out that there are some fundamental differences in how a disaster is reported and framed, and what people think is most important information to receive. As we move toward better a connecting of media content with consumer responses to it, these kinds of inconsistencies will become increasingly important to examine. Furthermore, these kinds of lack of connection are probably important for news media to both recognize and respond to.

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Table 2

Ratings of Importance of Story Topics by TV-, Newspaper- and Radio-Dependent People

Economic:	
TV-dependent	59%
Newspaper-dependent	49%
Radio-dependent	56%
Solidarity:	
TV-dependent	77%
Newspaper-dependent	74%
Radio-dependent	73%
Blame:	
TV-dependent	20%
Newspaper-dependent	24%
Radio-dependent	21%
Prediction:	
TV-dependent	67%
Newspaper-dependent	60%
Radio-dependent	67%
Devastation:	
TV-dependent	72%
Newspaper-dependent	68%
Radio-dependent	61%
Conflict:	
TV-dependent	53%
Newspaper-dependent	52%
Radio-dependent	47%
Helplessness:	
TV-dependent	51%
Newspaper-dependent	43%
Radio-dependent	50%

Table 3

Cross-tab of Media Dependence by response to question: "People who were harmed by the floods have only themselves to blame?"

	Strongly or Somewhat Agree	Strongly or Somewhat Disagree
TV	18%	72%
Radio	20%	80%
Newspaper	29%	71%
Other people	16%	84%

$\chi^2 = 19.471$ (n = 1813, d.f.=9, p = .02)

Table 4

Cross-tab of Media Dependence by response to question: "How important to you was news that showed how bad the flood was?"

	Very or Somewhat Important	Not very important or somewhat important
TV	90%	10%
Radio	81%	19%
Newspaper	88%	12%
Other people	86%	14%

$\chi^2 = 19.552$ (n = 1873, d.f.=6, p = .003)

Table 5

Cross-tab of Media Dependence by response to question: "How important to you was news about the negative economic impact of the flood?"

	Very or Somewhat Important	Not very important or somewhat important
TV	58%	42%
Radio	55%	45%
Newspaper	47%	53%
Other people	46%	54%

$\chi^2 = 27.516$ (n = 1845, d.f.=12, p = .007)

Table 6

Cross-tab of Media Dependence by response to question: "Did You Work as a Sandbagger?"

	Yes	No
TV	12%	88%
Radio	15%	85%
Newspaper	13%	87%
Other people	34%	66%

χ^2 = 31.821 (n = 1883, d.f.=3, p < .001)

Table 7

Cross-tab of Levels of TV-dependence by response to item: "People who were harmed by the floods have only themselves to blame."

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Low	0%	19%	57%	25%
Medium	4%	14%	63%	19%
High	2%	17%	63%	18%

χ^2 = 12.88 (n = 1873, d.f.=6, p = .045)

Table 8

Cross-tab of Levels of newspaper dependence by response to question: "How important to you was news that told people how to help each other?"

	Important	Neutral	Unimportant
Low	77%	14%	9%
Medium	70%	25%	5%
High	73%	23%	5%

χ^2 = 12.88 (n = 1873, d.f.=6, p = .045)

Table 9

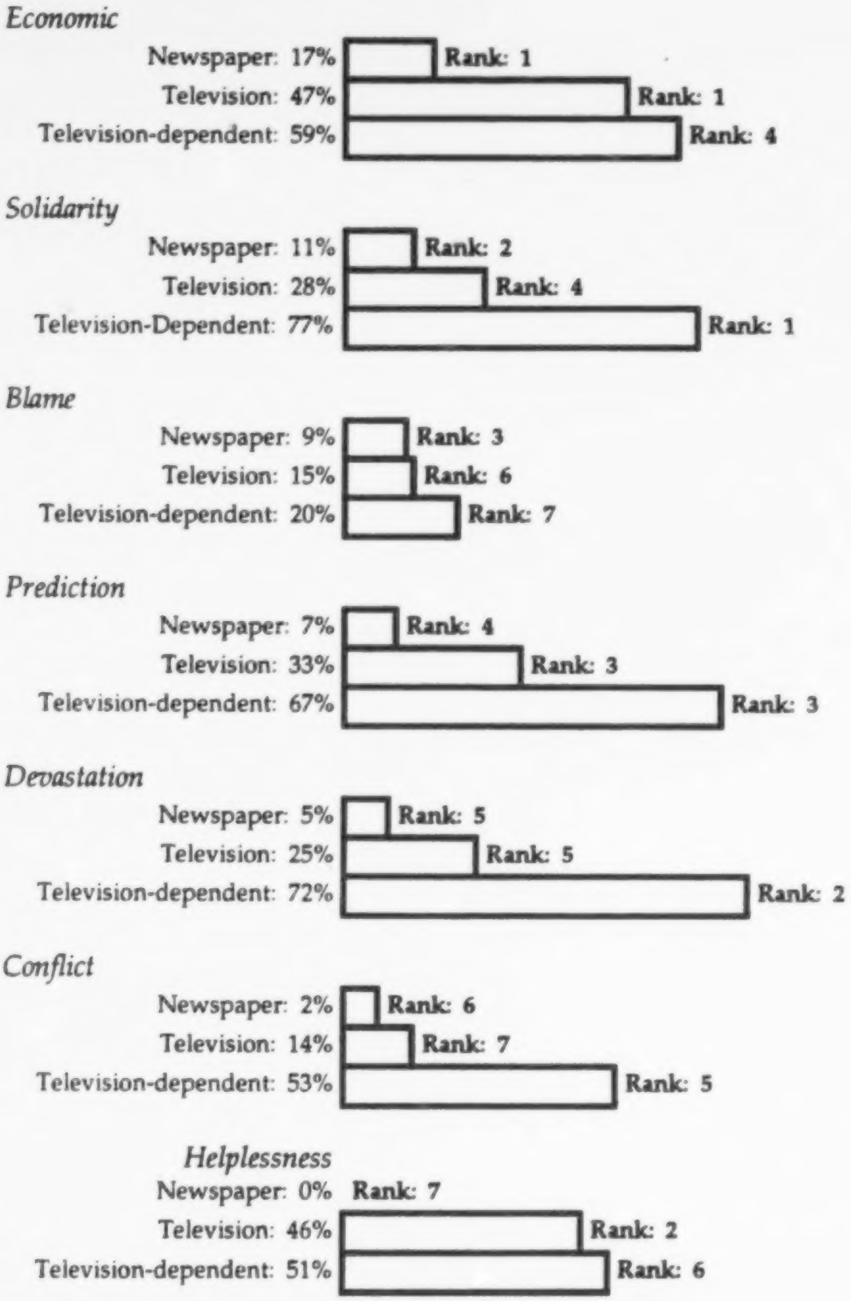
Cross-tab of Levels of Television Dependence by response to questions: "Did You Work as a Sandbagger?" and "Did You do other Volunteer Work, such as Prepare Food, Drive Volunteers, or help out in any way?"

	Yes	No
Sandbagger:		
Low	20%	80%
Medium	19%	81%
High	12%	88%
Volunteer:		
Low	46%	54%
Medium	41%	59%
High	36%	64%

Sandbagger: χ^2 = 15.017 (n = 1948, d.f.=2, p = .001)
Volunteer: χ^2 = 8.310 (n = 1948, d.f.=2, p = .016)

Figure 1

Frames in Newspaper and TV Coverage and the Perceived Importance of Frames by Television-dependent respondents*



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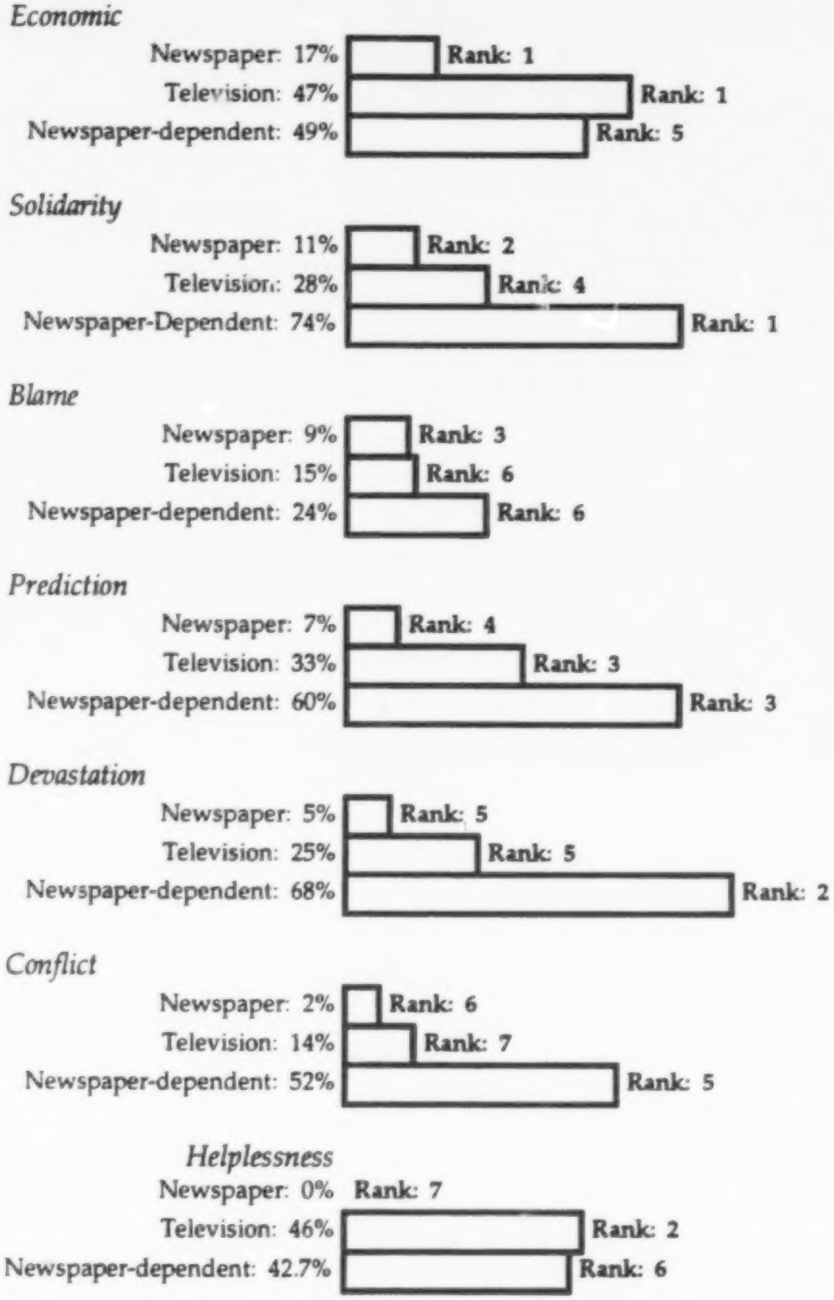
* Only one frame per story was coded for newspapers; television stories were coded for multiple frames.

Figure 2

Frames in Newspaper and TV Coverage and the Perceived Importance of Frames by Newspaper-dependent respondents*



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* Only one frame per story was coded for newspapers; television stories were coded for multiple frames.

Appendix

Variable	Wording
Independent Variables	
Media Dependency	
Primary Source of Information/ Dominant Medium	During the flood in 1993, what was your primary source of information? Would you say: TV, radio news, newspapers, news magazines, talk shows (either TV or radio) people you know, people at work, other (specify).
Media Dependency Index Constructed from Sources of Specific Information	
Information about Local Flood Crests	Where did you get information about local flood crests or river levels? [From TV, newspapers, radio, government officials, family, neighbors, other (specify).]
Information about where levees were breaking	(Latter sources repeated.)
Information about where to get shots and vaccinations	(Sources repeated.)
Information about where volunteers were needed	(Sources repeated.)
Information about weather forecasts	(Sources repeated.)
Information about bridges, highways and streets closings	(Sources repeated.)
Information about what to do if exposed to flood water	(Sources repeated.)
Information about warnings of flash floods in immediate area	(Sources repeated.)
Cronbach's alpha=.83	

Dependent Variables: Audience Frames

Prediction	For news you got during the flood, on a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 is very important and 5 is not very important at all, please tell me how important news about predictions of rainfall and flood damage was to you.
Solidarity	(Scale repeated.) News that told people how to help each other.
Solidarity (Secondary measure)	Did you give any money to flood relief efforts? Did you work as a sandbagger? Did you do other volunteer work such as prepare food, drive volunteers, or help in any way? Cronbach's alpha=.29
Devastation	(Scale repeated.) News that showed pictures about how bad the flood was.
Protection	(Scale repeated.) News that explained how people could protect themselves from flood damage.
Safety	(Scale repeated.) News about how to be healthy and safe.
Economic	(Scale repeated.) News about the negative economic impact of the flood.
Blame	(Scale repeated.) News that told who should be blamed for the flood.
Blame (Secondary measure)	Would you say that you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statements: "People who were harmed by the floods have only themselves to blame." "The Federal government was a good friend of Missourians during and after the floods." "State and local governments were important and helpful during and after the floods." "The property damage Missouri suffered from the floods would have been less if government had done a better job of designing the levees." "There would have been less injury and death in Missouri if the government in Washington had done a better job." "There would have been less injury and death in Missouri if the government in Missouri had

	done a better job." Cronbach's alpha=.57
Government help	(Scale repeated.) News that told what government officials were doing to help.
Conflict	(Scale repeated.) News that reported the conflict among those facing the flood and government officials such as FEMA.
Helplessness	Would you say that you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statements: "Once it starts raining as it did last year, there is nothing anyone can do to prevent a flood." "There is no way to avoid the possibility that another great flood will happen in Missouri in the next couple of years." Cronbach's alpha=.23
Government distrust index	Do you think people in government waste a lot of money we pay in taxes, waste some of it, or don't waste very much of it? How much of the time do you think you can trust the government to do what is right--always, most of the time, or only some of the time? Would you say the government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves or that it is run for the benefit of all? Do you feel that almost all of the people running the government are smart people who usually know what they are doing, or do you think that quite a few of them don't seem to know what they are doing? Do you think that some of the people running government are crooked or do you think that the people running government are by and large honest? Cronbach's alpha=.64

The Struggle to Be Heard

Press Coverage of a Haitian Civil Disturbance in Miami

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The United States has been called a melting pot of cultures, and one result of that has been a public disregard for anything non-American. Scholars have noted that this attitude has been as true of the media as of the general public. In fact, one journalism historian has complained of a "general lack of (media) interest in minority cultures and their contributions to society..."[1]

This is not necessarily intentional. It is normal for journalists to have difficulty reporting about people and cultures they do not understand.[2] As a result, immigrants and minorities tend to get less news coverage. These groups are also not the target audience for most major newspapers, so coverage of minority issues is limited. In addition, since known persons are much more likely to make the news than unknowns,[3] this exclusivity is accentuated. Such coverage may reinforce in the public's mind that some groups are "trivial."[4] Wolff has described American politics as a plateau where accepted interest groups give input on issues, while the fringe groups operate in a valley and struggle to gain recognition (as black civil rights groups did in the 1960s).[5] This struggle is as true in the media as in politics, as minority groups of class, race or thought try to ascend to the plateau.

This study examines press coverage of one minority group (Haitians in Miami) who are trying to reach the plateau. One goal was to see whether minority issues are covered with more sensitivity to minority viewpoints today, rather than simply using the official or government source perspective as has been observed in the past.

Literature Review

Media coverage is sometimes criticized not just because it ignores minorities but because crime and negative news dominate what coverage there is. One media study found that most news about Hispanic-Americans was hard news, with crime stories alone accounting for 16% of all stories (in newspapers) to 36% (on radio).[6] In two separate studies, Mexican-American and

Puerto Rican community leaders were upset that their negative portrayal in the media reinforces stereotypes created by an overemphasis of news about crime and violence, and a neglect of positive news.[7]

Patricia Raybon, a black journalist, has lambasted the media for the disproportionate emphasis on minority crime and poverty because "day after day, week after week, this message -- that black America is dysfunctional and unwhole -- gets transmitted across the American landscape."[8]

A number of studies have looked at the media coverage of Black Americans. Tatro found that local coverage of blacks in five southern newspapers did not change significantly in quantity from 1950 to 1970, but that the percentage of stories on black crime (although still high) dropped noticeably.[9] In his content analysis of the Wichita Eagle in 1968, Latta noted a lack of press attention to urgent social, economic and political problems of the local black community.[10]

Frustrated by their mistreatment, minority groups have sometimes turned to violence to draw more attention to their situation. Since the media tend to focus on controversy, such issues get high priority. That coverage, like all minority coverage, has drawn repeated criticism. It is not just a recent problem either. Coverage of riots in the early 20th Century is described as frequently inaccurate, misrepresenting black or minority positions.[11] More recently, Paletz and Dunn found that papers in the Winston-Salem area in 1967 covered a civil disorder with the goal of trying to calm the tension. As a result, little attention was given to the African-American viewpoint. In fact, the riot was told almost exclusively from the perspective of law enforcement and city officials.[12] Sigal has pointed out that the journalistic convention to seek authoritative (official) sources can "silence or distort opposition voices" because during a riot there may be no one else in authority.[13] So, he concludes that reporters often seek official sources for comment and neglect the opinions of the dissenters.[14] However, this pattern may be changing. Atwater and Weerakkody found that non-traditional sources were used more often in the Los Angeles Times coverage of the 1992 Los Angeles riots.[15]

Others have noted that the media usually cover the "event," but neglect to report on the causes behind disturbances. As David Paletz has said, "Underlying causes and actual impacts are little noted nor long remembered."[16] The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, which studied media coverage after the racial disturbances of the 1960s, also observed this deficiency.[17] Martindale discovered the same pattern when she did a content analysis of black protest stories from four metropolitan dailies in the 1960s. She concluded that because protests are covered as events, readers get little understanding of underlying causes.[18]

Although civil disorders draw public attention, it usually doesn't last for long. One study found that in the three years after the Los Angeles riots, there was no increased press coverage despite the residents' urgent grievances.[19] Extended coverage is important because studies have shown that greater knowledge about a person who is seen as different or threatening can reduce exploitation and a desire to harm that person.[20] When the Commission on Civil Disorders analyzed media coverage of blacks and minorities in the 1960s, they concluded that few articles give whites a feeling of what a black person faces.[21]

Martindale analyzed newspaper coverage from the 1950s to 1970s and found that more black issues were getting coverage in the 1970s than before. Instead of the focus only on riots (as in the 1960s), she found that more of the recent stories told about everyday activities.[22] So, she found some progress since the Commission's report. Despite this, she writes elsewhere that the

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media must work to explode myths about minorities.[23] She points out several reasons why minority news is not covered well. For one, news is usually covered as events with little analysis of underlying causes. Second, news usually centers on controversy, rather than harmony. And, third, most reporters are white and cannot fully understand minority problems. This points out the need for more minority hiring, because without it, as a BostonGlobe editor said: "The average daily newspaper still is covering this multi-faceted society through white eyes and ears."[24]

The city of Miami presents an interesting real-life laboratory for evaluating media coverage of minorities. More than half of the Miami population is Hispanic and most of those residents are of Cuban heritage. In addition, more than 20% of the population is African-American.[25] The Miami Herald has tried to reach the large Spanish-speaking audience by creating a Spanish edition known as El Nuevo Herald.[26] The Miami Herald, however, has not always received positive comments about its Hispanic coverage. Joan Didion, in her book Miami, notes that very little information about the daily life of Cubans was included in the paper. She writes of one of the few Cubans then on the Herald staff (in 1986), who wrote an article showing that "Miami Anglos were in fact interested in Cubans only to the extent that they could cast them as aspiring immigrants...or resident aliens" waiting to be assimilated.[27] In the last five years, however, Hispanics have gotten broader coverage in Miami as they have won more political positions within the region.

For another of the city's smaller immigrant groups, Miami's Haitians, however, the story has not been the same. It is estimated that there are somewhere between 80,000 and 150,000 Haitians living in Miami.[28] The exact number is not known because a large number of Haitians have come into the country illegally. Fleeing from a corrupt government and a denuded soil, thousands have come to America hoping for a new start. Yet, more than half of the recent immigrants are unable to find work.[29] As they try to draw media attention to their plight, they apparently face a double stigma -- because they are both blacks and immigrants. As the earlier studies show, those characteristics have too often been correlated with minimal and negative media coverage.

During the summer of 1990 Haitians made the headlines in Miami for one tense week. After a physical confrontation between a Cuban store employee and a Haitian customer, Haitians gathered at the store to protest what they felt was the mistreatment of one of their own. Within two days of the incident, more than a thousand Haitians gathered in front of the store, protesting what they saw as an injustice.

A few days later, a much smaller crowd gathered outside the Cuban store in protest (some wanted the store shut down). The apparently peaceful group (many were dancing and singing) was told by police to stop the illegal demonstration because they did not have a permit. When the protestors stayed, police used their nightsticks to move the protestors out, injuring several in the process. This week-long series of incidents received wide media play. It provides a situation to analyze how one newspaper covered a civil disturbance by a minority group. Since the Miami Herald operates in a city of many immigrants, it allows us to see whether their coverage can reduce or eliminate some of the media faults mentioned before.

Research Questions

Previous research suggests five questions for this present study, beginning with one broader issue and then focusing more specifically on reporting of racial disturbances. First, past studies have shown that crime stories and negative images tend to dominate coverage of minorities. So, I looked to see whether that same pattern would be present in the coverage of Haitians in Miami. Second, most earlier research has found that civil disorders are reported primarily from the official (law enforcement/government) view. I wanted to analyze whether this would occur in the coverage of the Haitian protests in Miami, or whether Haitian sources would be used more.

Third, many writers have criticized the media for focusing only on events and neglecting to cover the underlying causes behind disturbances. So, I checked to see whether this would be true in this incident. Fourth, since the media are often pictured as neglecting to give the public a perception of what a minority faces, I analyzed whether this was the case in Miami. And, finally, it was asked: Did the incident bring Haitians more news coverage after the disturbance than before? In other words, would it help to raise coverage of Haitians onto a plateau with other groups in Miami?

Method

The focus of the study was on the local news coverage of Haitians by the Miami Herald. Only stories from the metropolitan Miami area were included. The unit of analysis was the story.

A story was defined as Haitian, Cuban or about another minority group if there was mention of that group in the story, or if a person's name identified him or her as of that minority heritage. Also, if a picture or location of an incident identified it as about Haitians, for instance, then this was coded as a Haitian story.[30] Stories with Spanish names were coded as about a Cuban, only if their national heritage was mentioned. Otherwise, the story was coded as

Hispanic. A story could be coded as both Hispanic and Haitian if both groups were mentioned in the story.

The civil disturbances were covered during a nine-day period between June 30 and July 8, 1990. We then did a content analysis of that period as well as the four weeks prior to and after that. Local stories from all sections of the paper except sports were included in the analysis. This produced a total of 1,376 local articles. Three percent of those (46) were about Haitians.

Although I used a content analysis, I was also interested in the way the stories were handled, not just in numbers. As a reference or control, I read several articles about the disturbance as they appeared in the Los Angeles Times, New York Times and the Washington Post. This was done to provide a comparative analysis of the quality of the Herald coverage.

Results

Since Cubans are the largest single group in Miami, one would expect to find the most stories about Cubans, and this is true (see Figure 1). Eighteen percent of the local stories were about Cubans or Hispanics, while 9% were about African-Americans, and 3% were about Haitians. Other Caribbean groups were also mentioned but in a much smaller percentage. Since many stories do not specifically mention a person by race or are about subjects like the weather, they are not categorized.

Previous researchers have noted a high degree of crime coverage about minorities.[31] Yet, it is important to remember that each city has a different crime rate, so the percentage of minority crime stories should also be compared with the amount of crime stories in that newspaper. For the Miami Herald, 22% of all local stories during the study period were about crime. Most of the minority groups had crime coverage only slightly higher than that average (see Figure 2). The noticeable exception was stories about Hispanics which were about crime 40% of the time. For Haitians, the percentage of stories about crimes was 24%, showing that Haitians are not portrayed as any worse than other minority groups, as far as the number of crime stories.

Comparative numbers aside, it is still significant that one quarter of all stories about Haitians deal with crime. One such story tells of a Haitian baby who suffered severe brain damage after being beaten in her home.[32] The story describes the baby's surroundings as "a filthy one-bedroom Little Haiti apartment with no electricity or running water...feces in the bathroom, debris on the floor and a stench in the air."[33] This article was atypical of the more routine crime stories about Haitians, but the image is lasting. Most articles dealt with immigration problems or civil disorder. These also can create a negative image of Haitians, if not offset with other articles.

Some other stories about Haitians did have a different perspective. For instance, one obituary told of a young Haitian who worked 12+ hours a day to help his family.[34] He is described by his brother: "There's nothing he liked to do more than work." Formerly a tailor in Haiti, the deceased man was portrayed as one who until his death had been making clothes for others in his spare time, despite long hours at another job.

Another obituary told of an 18-year old Haitian who was attending a middle school just so he could get an education.[35] He was killed in an auto accident. The article told how he was loved by his teachers and idolized by his much younger classmates, who enjoyed his conga playing. These articles reveal a very different picture of Haitians than that in crime articles and they help to offset that negative image, although they appear on a later page where they may draw less attention. That cumulative image is important because it may have colored how readers perceived

Haitians when coverage of their protests began.

The second research question considered whether the Miami civil disturbance would be told primarily through official sources. An analysis (see Figure 3) shows that Haitian sources were used slightly more than government sources in the 13 stories dealing most directly with the civil disturbances, which is a significant change from earlier studies. The Washington Post and Los Angeles Times (Figure 3) also had a similar balance in their articles, although they did not use sources as extensively.

Even throughout the nine days of the Miami unrest, there were some noticeable changes in the way official sources were used. Right after the second disturbance, an article described the Cuban owner being trapped in his store by 1,000 Haitian protesters. The third paragraph, however, introduced a new element: "No one was injured or arrested, although the city leaders estimated the bill for police protection will cost taxpayers more than $200,000."[36] This focus on the cost of the police action drew immediate attention to a city concern even before there was a clear explanation of the Haitians' fear that an injustice was being ignored. Other articles focused more on official reaction and frustration with the Haitian protest (which was not legally approved by the city).[37] Despite this greater immediate attention on the official perspective, the articles did use Haitian sources extensively.

The coverage changed significantly on July 6 after police with nightsticks broke up an illegal gathering of Haitians in front of the Cuban clothing store. A number of Haitians were injured and taken to area hospitals after police physically dispersed the crowd. From that point on, Haitian complaints received higher priority in the articles. The focus of the issue was no longer on a more personal dispute but on claims of police mistreatment of a minority group.

One article described how riot squads "beat protestors," and crushed the protest.[38] The authors then told how the police changed their story of what happened and claimed the crowd rushed a barricade, while "newspaper and television reporters standing close to the action saw no aggression against police by demonstrators."[39] Another onlooker is also quoted as saying innocent bystanders were beaten: "They were just singing and dancing, and they were surrounded by police and treated like dogs."[40] Even a Haitian police chaplain is quoted: "They (the police) came in to give a beating to the people."[41]

City officials are given considerable space to deny the charges. One article focuses on whether the police action came because of political pressure from three Cuban city commissioners (who were concerned about the illegal protests in front of the Cuban store).[42] That this question of interest was even raised shows that the paper was not simply reflecting the city position. The article, however, does not use any quotes from Haitians or civil rights groups, only the city position.

An article on the next day by another journalist is handled differently. That later article describes the chief of police's fear that someone might have been killed,[43] but also notes that "police at first said the crowd provoked the sudden crackdown, something disputed by numerous witnesses."[44] The story also uses ironic juxtaposition to give a different angle on the official position: "City's Hall's response to Thursday's incident is in marked contrast to commissioners' reaction to another case when police used force to quell (Cuban) demonstrators (in 1982).[45] In that case, a blue ribbon panel was appointed to study police violence, which commissioners did not suggest this time. So, this second article (although not using direct quotes) did go beyond the police viewpoint.

The Struggle To Be Heard

In summary, the use of quotes in the coverage of the disturbances was fairly well balanced. In general, the priority page one articles gave extended coverage to the Haitian position. There were also separate sidebars giving the police position, which, depending on the author, gave more or less balance to the official position on the incident. In addition, after the violent breakup of the demonstration, the Haitian position was given broader coverage than it had earlier when it was reported as a more personal issue.

The third research question is related to the previous one. It asks whether causes were investigated in the articles or whether the focus was just on the event. In this case, although the initial fight involved a customer-employee argument, the subsequent protests did have much deeper causes. As with the use of sources, there is a gradual process here where causes get more coverage as the issues remain in the news over a period of days.

The initial article on June 30 focuses primarily on the event, although there are indications in the middle of the article about underlying causes.[46] In fact, two deeper reasons are suggested for the fight between the Cuban store employee and the Haitian customer. A Haitian radio announcer is quoted: "We are fed up with the police and Cuban business owners who are surviving because of the Haitians."[47] Second, a protestor, the police and a community official mention the Black-Cuban tension resulting from Nelson Mandela's visit to Miami the previous week.[48] So, although the fight in the story got the primary attention in the first article, the writers did begin to try to go beyond the event to suggest causes.

On the second day, a larger Haitian crowd gathered in protest outside the Cuban store. The illegality of the protest is mentioned along with different versions of what prompted the fight between the Cuban employee and the Haitian customer. In this article, there is a brief mention of the Mandela tension but no other suggestions of underlying causes that might prompt a crowd of 1,000 to protest.[49] The coverage is similar on the third day with focus on the police patience in dealing with demonstrators who were breaking signs, yelling racial epithets and had set a dumpster on fire.[50]

By the fourth day, the initial protest had wound down, but the frustration of the Haitian community was evident and the Herald began looking more into the causes. An article on July 3rd, gives voice to a number of Haitian concerns.[51] Pre-disturbance articles about Haitians had used few Haitian sources. The most common person quoted was Rev. Gerard Jean-Juste of the Haitian Refugee Center. Now, in this July 3 article, a number of different Haitians are quoted. Haitian accountant Lyle Renoit said, "This is the result of years of being described as ignorant, as illiterates... of smelling bad, and since 1980 of having imported AIDS here."[52] Others complained of a lack of respect for Haitians and discriminatory immigration policies.

Beatrice Louissaint, president of the Haitian-American Women's Coalition, said outsiders were not the only ones responsible for the tension. Many Haitians had shown up to protest after Haitian radio announcers made an urgent appeal in Creole. Louissaint said that the Haitian radio broadcasts could prompt immediate response because "a lot of (Haitian) people sit there and believe everything they say, literally."[53]

A separate story told of the importance of radio in the lives of those who don't know much English.[54] At the bottom of that story a radio announcer was quoted as saying, "This is big news to the Haitian community. They feel bad, very bad that they don't get respect."[55] So, as the event stayed in the news, more attention was given to causes, often in sidebar articles to the primary "event" coverage.

After the violent police intervention on July 5, even more space was devoted to causes. The Haitian lawyer for the man whose fight prompted the protests said, "We are a non-issue, a non-entity."[56] And a businessman said of the dispute: "It's not Cuban vs. Haitian. It's a matter of human reclamation."[57] A variety of Haitian concerns -- from discrimination to mistreatment by government and police officials -- are discussed as underlying causes for the Haitian frustration.

The fourth research question asked whether the Herald's articles -- as critics charged past media coverage had done -- would give little understanding of the challenges facing minorities. Much of the pre-disturbance coverage was about events such as immigration issues and Mandela's visit, although the two obituaries did show a different view of Haitian life. Overall, though, there was little attempt to focus on the daily challenges facing the Haitian population in Miami. During the coverage of the protests, concerns about injustice and other underlying causes were raised, but the focus on the protests kept attention away from other struggles. In the two weeks after the disturbances ended, however, there were two lengthy features which attempted to show more of the challenges facing Haitians.

The first article shared the Haitian frustrations through interviews with Haitians from various backgrounds.[58] Bernice Chauvet, a shopkeeper with a degree from American University in Paris, openly expressed her displeasure with many Haitians' docility toward injustice: "I'm not ready to swallow the crap other Haitians swallow."[59] Others express frustration with the government's inaction on unemployment, health care and social concerns.

The article also tells of a Haitian cab driver who came to the United States to get a teaching certificate, so he could become a teacher and earn enough to bring his family to Miami. He soon had to give up that goal, however, because "I had to work enough hours to support myself and to send money home."[60] He works 12 to 14 hour days, and has not had a week off during 10 years in America. He shares how he was cursed by a policemen for parking in a certain area, and suggests that Haitians do not get respect from anyone. Many Haitians are stereotyped as taxi drivers, so this article again tries to break that stereotype by showing the struggles such a person faces.

The feature also includes interviews with a Haitian university professor and a lawyer. The attorney, who works for the state, describes a Haitian teenager who tried to hide his Haitian identity. When his girl friend found out that he was Haitian, she let him go, and the boy committed suicide.

That article and a later one also bring out the adjustments facing a Haitian in America -- changing from a rural, traditional society to a totally different culture, dealing with prejudice, unemployment and language barriers, and struggling to adjust in the Miami school system where there are only 70 Haitian teachers, but more than 12,000 Haitian school children.

The second feature also notes cultural misunderstandings and language problems. A Haitian policeman says, "In Haiti, police are there to beat you up...."[61] If used earlier, his comments would have given much more insight into the earlier protests.[62] So, after the event coverage subsided, these two features illuminated the daily struggles facing Haitians in Miami. These types of article, if continued, could help to break down stereotypes, but the pattern of news coverage suggests that these July feature articles will become less common. In fact, the final research question, was to see the impact of the disturbance on the amount of local news coverage of Haitians. Overall, there were 12 stories about Haitians in the four weeks before the protests, 20 stories during the nine days of the disturbances, and 14 stories in the four weeks afterward.

This does show that the amount of coverage has already dropped down to previous levels. In fact, when this is broken down by week (see Figure 4), the pattern is even more evident. Most weeks before the disturbance saw 3-4 articles on Haitians, but by the third and fourth weeks after the protests, there were only one to two articles a week. This could be a momentary slow period, but it still shows how rapidly coverage can drop off. One week of news is not enough to get more consistent minority coverage for a minority group.

Conclusions

Reaching the plateau -- becoming part of the agenda -- is a long process. In fact, it is significant that a number of the Herald's articles on Cubans deal with elections, while there are no election articles about Haitians. Cubans have become key politicians and voters in Miami, while less than 3% of Miami-area voters are Haitian.[63] A group that makes a political impact is also in the news. This has not happened for Haitians. Thus, the summer demonstrations brought momentary focus on the Haitians, but may not have added to their long-term place in the news. That dropoff is seen even in the first four weeks after the incident. It would be helpful, however, to do another study a year later and see if the amount and type of Haitian issues in the news has changed over a longer time.

Earlier studies have shown that disturbances of the 1960s were usually told almost exclusively through official government and police sources. This was not true in the Miami Herald coverage of the Haitian protests and it is a significant change. It could be that newspapers have learned from the 1960s and have begun to use more balanced coverage. In fact, the same emphasis on greater balance was also apparent in the attribution of the Los Angeles Times and

Washington Post in their coverage of the same event, although the Herald used a much greater array of sources. It is possible that the Miami Herald has learned from the challenges of reporting a multi-ethnic population and is more sensitive to such reporting. It would be interesting to compare the Herald's coverage with a paper in a city with less minorities to see whether this sensitivity is exhibited there also.

Another encouraging result of the intensive coverage was the number of different Haitian sources used in the newspaper. The Rev. Gerard Jean-Juste is the most often quoted Haitian in Miami, but few others are usually heard from. During the nine days of the crisis, however, more than 20 different Haitians were quoted, giving a much more multi-faceted perspective on Haitian opinions. One criticism would be that most interviewees are English-speaking. It would be helpful to hear more from recent immigrants, who would need to be interviewed in Haitian Creole. In order to do this, finding minority reporters must continue to be a priority. This is true not just for the Herald; it may be even more needed at some other papers around the United States.

This study also showed that as this civil disturbance gained prolonged coverage, articles began to give more space to investigating the causes behind the unrest. Event coverage dominated at first, but gradually broadened. As an event stays before the public's eyes, the media may then be more likely to go beyond the surface. If an event is of shorter duration, the reporters must work harder to sensitize themselves sooner to watching for underlying causes.

The two post-protest features on Haitians in Miami are excellent examples of giving an audience a much broader perspective of the daily life of a minority. The articles help to eliminate stereotypes and show some remarkable examples of Haitian perseverance. Yet, there is more that could be done During the nine-weeks of this content analysis there were no mentions of Haitian architecture, recipes or restaurants Didion noticed the same lack of Cuban recipes in her 1987 book about Miami, even though Cubans are such a significant part of the population[64] It is important that minorities be visible not just in crime and death stories, but in food and business The Herald did take some steps to give a broader perspective For instance, they had an article on a new Caribbean marketplace with several Haitian shops Other articles could also be used Stories on English-language classes, starting a business or working as a Haitian lawyer could each provide useful insights into the different challenges facing Haitians in Miami (not everyone is a new immigrant)

One final observation concerns the way reports of the protests were used in several metropolitan newspapers One six-column inch wire story in The New York Times mentioned the demonstrators' allegation that the Haitian immigrant was beaten but did not include any comment from the Cuban store owner

That same story also describes the police in riot gear arresting 50 people, but says nothing about police hitting any demonstrators Then, in the third paragraph, the articles says, "Four of those arrested were in stable condition at Jackson Memorial Hospital after treatment for minor facial cuts, scrapes and bruises."[65] Someone who did not know the background could be totally confused wondering how those arrested were injured! This shows how wire stories, often edited for space, can easily be confusing In addition, the space considerations mean that no attention is given to underlying causes There is a strong indication that space is the prime culprit because two longer stories in the Los Angeles Times and Washington Post[66] did mention some of the underlying causes (although not in as much detail as the Herald's local coverage) A person reading a news brief of the Miami incident could easily classify the story under existing stereotypes of racial unrest, without any understanding of underlying issues That should be a warning to newspapers to be careful what issues are relegated to the news briefs -- a short article may well do more harm than good

In all, this study suggests that there have been advances in the reporting of racial disturbances Both the Herald coverage and the two longer articles in the Times and Post pointed out underlying causes and were not told just from the "official" view The Herald's articles gave a much broader view and included many more quotes than the staff reporters for the other two outside papers This might be expected because of a greater network of contacts And, this limited network of sources also reveals why national coverage sometimes lacks the depth and insight that the Herald coverage provided

The dropoff in Haitian coverage after the protests also suggests that long-term awareness will take a concerted effort by newspapers to help their readers understand some of the deeper daily challenges facing the minorities within their cities

FIGURE 1: Local Story Totals (June 2 - August 5, 1990)					
	6/2-6/29	6/30-7/8*	7/9-8/5	TOTAL	% of Total
Local stories	629	192	555	1376	100
Crime Stories	136	38	129	303	22
Haitian (all)	12	20	14	46	3
Haitian (about crime)	(2)	(8)	(1)	(11)	
African-Amer	62	14	52	128	9
Afric.-Amer. (about crime)	(17)	(2)	(16)	(35)	
Cuban	58	27	49	134	10
Cuban (about crime)	(10)	(9)	(11)	(30)	
Hispanic	46	9	52	107	8
Hispanic (about crime)	(19)	(1)	(23)	(43)	

* Period of protests

FIGURE 2 Percentage of Herald Stories About Crime

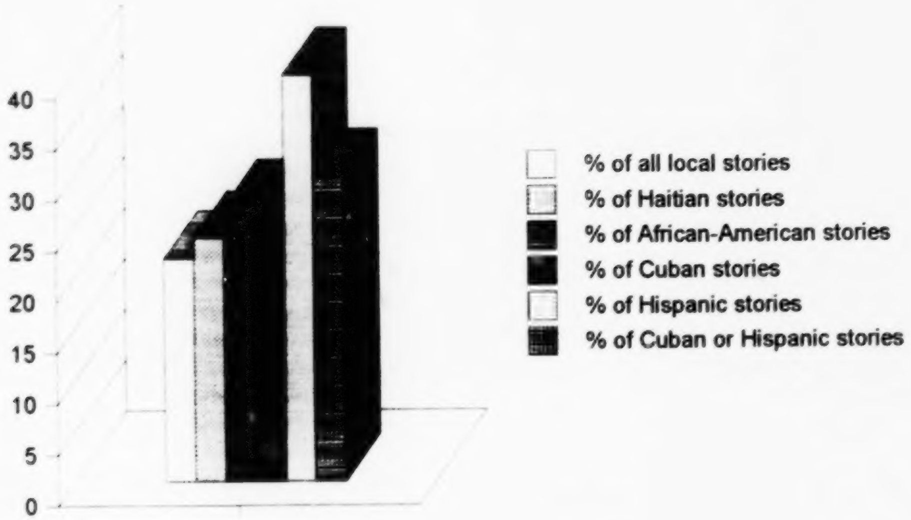

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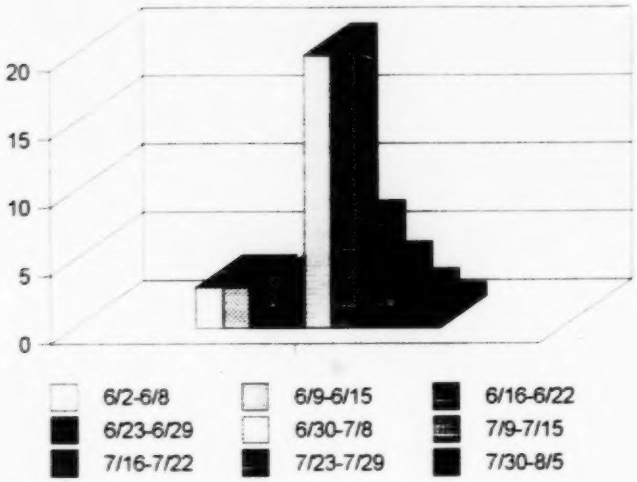
FIGURE 3-- Sources in Miami Herald Articles on the Civil Disturbance		
Sources	# times used	% of total sources
Haitian	40	38
Official (police/govt.)	38	36
Cuban	14	13
Non-government community leaders	9	8
Onlookers	5	5
TOTAL	106	100%
Sources in Washington Post/L.A. Times Articles on the Civil Disturbance		
Sources	# times used	% of total sources
Haitian	5	50
Official	4	40
Cuban	1	10

FIGURE 4: Trying to Reach the Plateau:

Number of Haitian Stories in Miami Herald by Week



END NOTES

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3. Herbert Gans says "known" people are four times more likely to make the news than unknowns; cited in Manoff and Schudson, 12.

4. Robert Karl Manoff and Michael Schudson, "Reading the News," in Schudson and Manoff, 8.

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7. Felipe Korzenny, Betty Ann Griffis, Bradley S. Greenberg, et al., "How Community Leaders, Newspaper Executives and Reporters Perceive Mexican-Americans and the Mass Media," in Greenberg et al., Mexican-Americans and the Mass Media, Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corp., 1983; and Pia Nicolini, "Puerto Rican Leaders' Views of English-Language Media," Journalism Quarterly 64:2-3 (Summer/Autumn 1987): 597-601. See also Mark Fitzgerald, "Racism in Detroit?" Editor and Publisher, 3 March 1984, 8-9. That article discusses three researchers who studied the Detroit daily newspapers and noted other stereotypes in articles about minorities. Becker said of one article which described blacks as "drinking Ripple wine, smoking cigars and eating Church's Fried Chicken": "Now if that's not racially insensitive, I don't know what is."

8. Patricia Raybon, "A case of severe bias," Newsweek, 2 October 1989, 11.

9. The percentage of crime items dropped from 50% in 1950 to 24% in 1970. Helen Louis Tatro, "Local News Coverage of Blacks in Five Deep South Newspapers, 1950 to 1970," Journalism Abstracts 10 (1972): 336.

10. Robert L. Latta, "A Content Analysis of News of Black Americans As Presented by the Wichita Eagle and a Comparison with Empirical Data," Journalism Abstracts 9 (1971): 225.

11. See Elliott M. Rudwick, Race Riot at East St. Louis, July 2, 1917, Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1964 and Arthur I. Waskow, From Race Riots to Sit-In, 1919 and the 1960s, Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1967.

12. David Paletz and Robert Dunn, "Press Coverage of Civil Disorders: A Case Study of Winston-Salem, 1967," Public Opinion Quarterly 33 (1969-1970): 328-345.

13. Sigal, "Sources Make the News," 33, in Manoff and Schudson.

14. James W. Carey has also noted that in explaining seemingly irrational behavior such as riots, journalists seek experts. Since the experts don't always agree, however, "it usually comes down to whom the journalist chooses to trust." Carey, "The Dark Continent of American Journalism," in Manoff and Schudson, 189.

15. Tony Atwater and Niranjala Weerakkody, "A Portrait of Urban Conflict: The L.A. Times Coverage of the Los Angeles Riots," paper presented to the Newspaper division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication at the 1994 AEJMC Convention, Atlanta.

16. David L. Paletz and Robert M.Entman, Media, Power and Politics, New York: Free Press, 1981, 17.

17. Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, New York: New York Times Co., 1968, 363-366.

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19. Paula Johnson, David Sears and John McConahay, "Black Invisibility, the Press and the Los Angeles Riot," American Journal of Sociology 76(January 1971): 698-721.

20. Ibid, 718.

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21. Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, 363,383.

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25. These figures are taken from the 1990 United States Census of Population and Housing, P.L.94-171 Redistricting Data.

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28. Elinor Burkett, "Haitian Voices," *Miami Herald*, 11 July 1990, 4D.

29. David Hancock, Sandra Dibble and Kimberly Crockett, "Haitians: We want respect in S. Florida," *Miami Herald*, 22 July 1990, 17A.

30. This coding scheme was based on one used by Johnson, Sears and Mcconahay in "Black Invisibility, the Press and the Los Angeles Riot." They considered an article to be about blacks if it referred to racial laws, was about a known geographic location with high concentration of black residents, or if a picture was used which identified a person's race. See also Carrie Heeter, et al.

31. See, for instance, Heeter et al. and Nicolini.

32. Andres Viglucci, "HRS Supervision Couldn't Spare Baby," *Miami Herald*, 23 June 1990, 1B.

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34. Karen Branch, "Jean Lafortune Struck by Lightning at N. Miami Home," *Miami Herald*, 26 June 1990, 3B.

35. Karen Branch, "Nady Augustin Tried to Fulfil Mom's Dream," Miami Herald, 23 June 1990, 3B.

36. Charles Strouse and David Hancock, "1,000 Haitians Trap Store Owner," Miami Herald, 1 July 1990, 1B.

37. See, for instance, the editorial "Inciting Mob Rule," Miami Herald, 3 July 1990, 12A.

38. Kimberly Crockett, David Hancock and Carlos Harrison, "Police Crush Haitian Protest," Miami Herald, 6 July 1990, 1A.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid., 12A.

41. Ibid.

42. Luis Feldstein Soto, "Action not result of political pressures, city says," Miami Herald, 6 July 1990, 12A.

43. Carl Goldfarb, "Chief: Force needed to avoid 'mob,'" Miami Herald, 7 July 1990, 1B.

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid., 4B.

46. Nancy San Martin and David Hancock, "Fistfight turns into standoff, ends peacefully," Miami Herald, 30 June 1990, 1B-2B.

47. Ibid., 2B.

48. Miami's city officials were the only one of eight American cities not to give Mandela an official greeting (because many of Miami's Cuban officials had felt that Mandela's support from Castro could not be condoned). This official snub infuriated many African-Americans in Miami.

49. Charles Strouse and David Hancock, "1,000 Haitians Trap Store Owner," Miami Herald, 1 July 1990, 1B-2B.

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52. Ibid.

53. Ibid.

54. Sandra Dibble, "Radio's critical role for area Haitians," Miami Herald, 3 July 1990, 2B.

55. Ibid.

56. Luis Feldstein Soto, Sandra Dibble and Karen Branch, Miami Herald, 7 July 1990, 1A.

57. Ibid.

58. Elinor Burkett, "Haitian Voices," Miami Herald, 11 July 1990, 1D.

59. Ibid.

60. Ibid., 4D.

61. David Hancock, Sandra Dibble and Kimberly Crockett, "Haitians: We Want Respect in S. Florida," Miami Herald, 22 July 1990, 1A,17A.

62. In that same article, Haitian activist Rev. Gerard Jean-Juste points out another impact of the recent violence when he says that to people in the Third World "police are terror agents and of course this (violence by the police) has reinforced that perception." Ibid., 17A.

63. "Haitians: We want respect in S. Florida," 17A.

64. Didion, 58.

65. "Dozens Arrested in Miami at Haitian Protest," The New York Times, 6 July 1990, A9.

66. Barry Bearak, "Ethnic relations in Miami unravel as argument over pants erupts into violence," Los Angeles Times, 7 July 1990, A21; and Laura Parker, "Haitian tensions surface; 58 protestors arrested at Cuban-run store," Washington Post, 7 July 1990, A4.

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Social Determinants of Journalists' Decision-making in Ethical Dilemmas

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Social Determinants of Journalists' Decision-making in Ethical Dilemmas

Much of the scholarship of media ethics places inordinate emphasis, and not inappropriately, on the moral agency of the individual communicator. But such an intense focus on personal moral reasoning risks losing sight of the larger social context of ethical decision-making. What of the influence of editors, of co-workers in the newsroom, of competitors, of management policies, of professional norms, of perceptions of audience reaction, or even of the relevant law? Surely no journalist -- no individual in society -- can solve her ethical problems in a social vacuum, relying only on internal moral reasoning. An exploration of these possible external influences would seem to provide, at the very least, a heightened understanding of journalism behavior. Yet too often in the scholarship of media ethics, that sort of inquiry has been short-circuited in the interest of more immediate judgments of what *ought* to be done in accordance with moral theory or social responsibility.

This study represents the sort of research question that lies between paradigms in mass communication research, yet certainly within its overall domain. The traditional paradigm of media ethics has been so narrowly drawn that the research, while insightful in many important respects, has failed to consider the place of media ethics in the larger processes and effects of mass communication. And communication research, so often preoccupied with measurement of content and effects, has failed to consider the origin of the values and principles that comprise a great deal of the foundation of news work.

Part of the problem is that ethics compels a consideration of the moral duties that underlie many cognitions and behaviors of journalists, but which are not easily observable, even to practitioners at the moment of the decision. The foremost scholars in media ethics tend to explore the deepest roots of ethics with logic, moral theory and social theory, rather than with empirical observation. Hodges (1986), Elliott (1986) and Christians et al. (1987), for example, trace media responsibilities to time-honored ethical principles that can be applied not only to journalistic cases but to any human interaction in which a moral choice must be made. They also, as most other media ethicists do, discuss responsibilities also in the context of journalism's broader obligations to society. It is entirely possible that journalists on deadline do not reason deductively from ethical principles to make a specific ethical decision, or consider their broader social responsibility. But there is precious little evidence as to whether they do or do not.

The purpose of this inquiry is to suggest -- and implement -- a conceptual framework for the study of mass communication into which media ethics can be placed, in the hope that the integration can enhance not only the social scientist's understanding of the values that drive media processes but also the ethical and legal scholar's appreciation of the "realities" surrounding that work. In an effort to test and illustrate this bridged paradigm, the study endeavors to measure empirically one aspect of journalists' ethical and legal behavior: the social determinants of ethical decision-making.

Concepts and Methods

In reconciling the two vast literatures of media sociology and media ethics, the key linkage seems to be the concept of values, which sociologists observe as predictors of behavior and which ethicists describe for their moral content. As Christians et al. (1987) explain, values reflect presuppositions about social life that are important to the persons involved. Each person is capable of judging situations according to different sets of values: aesthetic values, logical values, professional values or moral values, for example. Hence the central position of values in Figure 1. Values comprise the fundamental basis of moral judgment, but values alone do not guide the moral agent; they simply describe the agent's social and moral referents. The theoretical thesis of this study is that values must first be filtered through one or more social determinants of behavior before they can actually influence a decision.

Traditionally here has been an assumption among media ethicists (see for example Lambeth, 1986, and Klaidman & Beauchamp, 1986) that ethics is done through a process of moral reasoning that uses, either inductively or deductively, moral principles. The implication, again, is that the process is internal and highly individual. Even much of the empirical work in this area supports such an assumption. The vast majority of empirical research on journalism ethics is descriptive (Morin, 1986; Wulfmeyer, 1990; Anderson & Leigh, 1992; Black, Steele & Barney, 1993), reporting journalists' reaction to various ethical questions and problems. But there is also a small, growing body of literature (see Meyer, 1987; Wright, 1989; Shamir, Reed & Connell, 1990; Singletary, Caudill, Caudill & White, 1990; White & Pearce, 1991; White &

Singletary, 1993) that has attempted to move beyond the descriptive questions about where the ethical lines are drawn, and to inquire how and why journalists draw the lines. The theoretical conclusions of this recent work can be summarized as such: Journalists seem to be guided in their ethics by either intrinsic motivations (such as religious upbringing, personal moral compass or desire for career advancement) or external heuristics (such as codes of ethics, peer pressure or the threat of reprimand). Generally it is the internal, or intrinsic, qualities of the journalist that more strongly predict her ethical decision-making. The work suggests a revitalization of the concept of the individual "virtuous journalist" as the dominant force in the resolution of ethical issues.

Such conclusions may be premature. The literature of sociology and social psychology suggests by implication that journalistic behavior, and by extension journalism ethics, is not a matter of intrinsic, individual choice alone. It seems more likely that ethical behavior occurs amid a dynamic swirl of social factors. DeGeorge (1985) has stated that ethics, despite the apparent individualism of moral agency, is fundamentally a social phenomenon. It involves social interaction and therefore should be analyzed primarily in a social context. The impact of formal ethics codes or moral reasoning, therefore, may not be the only factors governing the behavior of journalists as they ponder, however briefly, what they ought to do. Also, we should not expect that journalists respond to either intrinsic or extrinsic factors -- one or the other. There is more likely an interaction of factors, as there is in most complex human behaviors, and a model and its subsequent analysis should be able to account for that kind of interaction.

A conceptual model has been developed in an attempt to examine why journalists do the things they do. This framework begins with an adaptation of a more comprehensive model of influences on media content, by Shoemaker and Reese (1991). The overall theoretical goal for this model is to learn the relative importance of each determinant in influencing a particular journalistic behavior. It proposes seven social determinants of ethical decision-making (each of which will be discussed below in detail along with the findings for each determinant): Individual, Small Group, Organizational, Competitive, Occupational, Extramedia, and Legal.

Shoemaker and Reese suggest that there exists a "hierarchy of influences" on media content, and one of the key research question here is whether such a hierarchy exists in influence upon ethical decision-making. If the structure of the model is somewhat complex, the dynamics of the model are no doubt even more so. As Figure 1 suggests, there is a body of values that is grounded in social responsibilities and ethical principles, but those values do not automatically influence a journalist's decision. There is no guarantee of finding ethics in any of the above-listed determinants. Ethically-grounded values may or may not have a presence in any one of them.

Nor is any social determinant more "ethical" than any other. For example, a journalist may feel that to betray a source and name him in an article may violate organizational policy, but it also may advance her career because of the story's blockbuster potential. In this case, the company policy appears to be grounded in moral values and principles, while the Individual influence seems morally vacant.

One of the most useful features of this model is that it allows the various social determinants to be in conflict with each other, as some determinants can effectively block out ethical values while others provide the conduits for ethical values. However, the model also allows for an ethical decision that can be supported by every one of the determinants in the model simultaneously. Such a confluence is rare, however, because an ethical problem, almost by definition, involves a resolution of conflicting duties.

OPERATIONALIZATION AND METHODOLOGY

Under what conditions and influences is a certain decision made in an ethical situation, and is there a hierarchy of these influences? To attempt to answer those questions, a telephone survey of daily journalists was conducted. A sampling frame of journalists in southern Wisconsin was developed with the cooperation of (nearly all) news executives at television and radio stations with news operations, and at daily and weekly newspapers of general circulation. A probability sample of 118 was stratified, to ensure equal numbers of print and broadcast journalists, and equal numbers of journalists working in large news organizations and medium-to-small organizations.[1]

The telephone interview schedule began with the presentation of three hypothetical scenarios. In the first, a news reporter and photographer sneak into a nursing home (on which they are doing an investigative piece, and from which they had been formally denied access) by posing as janitors. It taps the ethical issue of deception. The second scenario concerns whether to publish (or broadcast) the name of a teen-age suspect in a highly-publicized murder in the community. The ethical concern here is invasion of privacy. In the third situation, a mayoral candidate is the target of allegations, lodged by disgruntled former employees, of improprieties. A news outlet decides to report the allegations without verifying them or presenting the candidate's side of the story. This scenario raises the ethical issue of fairness.

The first survey question after the telling of each scenario was whether the journalist's behavior is acceptable to the respondent, on a numerical rating scale of one to ten, where one is utterly unacceptable and ten is perfectly acceptable. This rating of acceptability, especially when it is combined across all three scenarios, becomes the key dependent variable in the study.

Of greater concern in this study than the rightness or wrongness of a particular decision, however, are the primary independent variables that comprise the hierarchy of influences upon that rating of acceptability. Each respondent was asked to react to several closed-ended items, each intended to represent one of the seven independent variables. Respondents were asked to rate the salience of each statement on a scale of one to ten, where one meant that the statement was irrelevant to her thinking about the journalist's actions, and ten meant that the statement was crucial to her thinking as she pondered each scenario. The items were stated three times, once for each scenario.[2]

Because two items represented each category of influence (independent variable), their scores were examined to determine inter-item correlation. The correlations were not only significant but robustly so, for nearly every matched pair in every scenario, and certainly in the overall correlations. The coefficients of the measures for each determinant were significantly correlated (at $p < .01$) across all three scenarios as well -- thus enabling a summary analysis that, with few exceptions, does not need to distinguish between scenarios.

Findings

What, then, did the 118 journalists surveyed reveal about their decision-making processes in sticky ethical and legal situations? Table 1 reports the means of the items representing the social determinants. The key research question, regarding the relative influences of these determinants upon an ethical judgment, suggests multiple regression analysis. Table 2 reports the relative strength of each of the social determinants. The results and patterns among the variables will be discussed below in the context of each of the determinants.

{Bivariate correlations between several demographic or objective items (type of medium, size of medium, degree in journalism, etc.) and the acceptability of the journalists' decisions were measured. However, none of these indicators enjoyed significant association with the dependent variable at an alpha level of less than .05. Whatever else may be influencing how a journalist decides, it does *not* seem to be the influence of age, gender, education or any of the other similar measures taken in the survey.}

We now turn to a closer examination of the conceptualization and empirical performance of each of the social determinants.

INDIVIDUAL INFLUENCE

The conceptualization of the Individual influence centers on the journalist herself. There are influences that each person brings to her journalistic work from sources unrelated specifically to her work -- sources that reside intrinsically in her decision-making processes. Specifically, there are three dimensions of Individual influence: personal background (and personality); personal attitudes, values and beliefs; and personal moral reasoning. Each emphasizes the qualities in individual decision-making that may act independently of external, socially-shared influences. Thus the two items that comprised the index for Individual influence were "I like to reason these things out on the basis of my own logica nd feelings," and "I rely on my own personal values in situations like this."

There are some indications in the literature that Individual influence is central to the ethical decision. Carlin (1966) found that "inner disposition" predicted strongly to "ethical lawyering" in a study of New York City attorneys. Weaver and Wilhoit (1991) found that journalists cited "family upbringing" as a prominent source (though not the most prominent source) of their ethical orientations. Whether one views the individual as a singular psychological complex or the product of lifelong socialization and role learning, there is a set of values and a personal history that, again independently of external forces, reflects varying degrees of ethical principles.

Analysis of individual media workers fell out of favor several years ago as researchers' attention turned to the larger social forces influencing media content. One substantial exception is the work of Stocking and Gross (1989), which applies findings on cognitive processing to such journalistic processes as news gathering and editing. Stocking and Gross assert that the human capacity for processing information is limited; thus people take mental shortcuts, primarily falling back on familiar and preferred cognitive routines. But unlike White's early thesis that much depends on personal idiosyncrasies, Stocking and Gross recognize that each journalist's cognitive map is not the product of an individual mind in isolation. They cite important influences on the map -- external, organizational, occupational -- which also coincide with the other social determinants in the present model. Other communicator research in this vein seems to suggest a revitalization of the concept of the individual "virtuous journalist" as an important force in the resolution of ethical issues. In fact, White and Pearce (1991) found that only intrinsic factors predicted to the non-exploitive decision in a hypothetical ethical situation.

The central hyporthesis of the study was this:

Among the seven independent variable concepts, the Individual influence will enjoy the strongest predictive value across all three scenarios. This reflects the general findings, described in the literature above, that personal, intrinsic values, largely unfiltered by social influences, have great predictive power. As tables 1 and 2 demonstrate, the hypothesis lies in disgrance. The overall salience of Individual items was lower than the mean for all determinants, and the relationship between the items and the dependent variable also remained nonsignificant throughout the regression analysis.

The tables indicate, however, the Individual factors are not irrelevant to the journalist's orientation. Despite its poor showing overall, Individual influence did exceed the mean response occasionally.

SMALL-GROUP INFLUENCE

Beyond the realm of the individual psyche, but not too far beyond, lies the influence of the small, informal groups in which the journalist performs her work tasks. This is one of the more subtle levels of influence, but most journalists interviewed acknowledged its force -- sometimes grudgingly. As a level of analysis of journalistic behavior or ethics, small groups have received scant attention. Neither Hirsch (1977) in his earlier examination of levels of analysis of news making, nor Shoemaker and Reese (1991) assigned a discrete category of influence to small groups. Both apparently regarded this influence as part of the organization's influence. It could very well be, however, that the policy of an organization may formally require behavior that is routinely ignored because of the dynamics of small-group relations (among other influences as well). It is here, at the small-groups level, that social structures and social interactions come into contact with the individual, who ultimately must make the ethical decision. The Small Group influences on behavior are usually subtle and informal. This is familiar territory to social psychologists and sociologists, but it has seldom been the focus of media sociology, let alone journalism ethics. The broader literature suggests three dimensions to the influence: socialization, interaction, and roles.

If ethics involves a person's application of values, we must first discover whence the values arrive. The answer lies largely in socialization, the process by which individuals learn skills, knowledge, values and roles appropriate to their position in a group. Some socialization of journalists occurs in college-level journalism departments, and to a lesser extent through occupational associations and publications, but the most direct and pervasive context of socialization seems to be the newsroom itself. This setting seems to offer little formal training as to social rules, but they are quickly learned nonetheless, through the ongoing observation of editors and co-workers (Breed, 1955). The indicator used for this dimension concerned, naturally, the respondent's observation of the behavior of peers: "I try to recall whether my co-workers have done something similar in the past."

After the socialization has taken place, what are the interactive processes in small groups by which decisions are made? The small group usually -- and certainly in journalism -- is part of a larger organization that has assigned tasks and duties to the group and its individual members. The desire to succeed in any group induces pressure to conform (Baron, Kerr & Miller, 1992) as the anchor/reporter's story above illustrates. Most journalists do not want to say or do things that "diverge from the common wisdom" (Shoemaker & Reese, 1991, p. 142). The indicator for this dimension concerned this interaction: "I talk to a co-worker or editor whose views I respect before I (engage in behavior similar to what was described in the scenario)."

As the frequencies in Table 1 show, the mean of responses to the Small Group indicators was close to the overall mean. But the overall regression analysis revealed surprising strength in this influence. Table 2 shows that Small Group achieved a final-block Beta coefficient of .21, whose significance level of .065 makes it worthy of mention. Small-group considerations seemed to move respondents toward a decision. And the decision was positive; that is, the Small Group influence seems to predict to approval of the controversial actions in the scenarios. Most of the other social determinants were *negatively* associated with the respondents' reactions to the stories. Thus the items' reference to colleagues and editors emboldens a journalist to take some risks ethically, sometimes in the face of cautions presented by Occupational norms, Extramedia forces, or even the law. It is also interesting that the Organizational influence failed to achieve a significant correlation in the regression analysis. Thus if one's co-workers -- and especially one's immediate editor -- agree with a questionable strategy and if others nearby seem to have undertaken the strategy in the past, then considerations of larger company policy seem to fade away.

ORGANIZATIONAL INFLUENCE

Perhaps the most well-traveled level of analysis in this study's theoretical model is the Organizational level. As an administrative and functional structure established to facilitate group activity, an organization by its nature places restrictions on individual autonomy. Considering that moral agency requires at least a modicum of autonomy, implications for ethics arise immediately. In order to meet the organization's goals, a person is required to respond to the demands of others from various directions -- demands which inevitably conflict from time to time.

The literature on organizational behavior suggests three key dimensions to the way an Organization influences a journalist's decisions. The first is what Beach (1990) would call the "shared image" of the organization. This is a set of generally understood attitudes of the management, reinforced by the organization's history, which provide a philosophical or ethical heuristic for each member. The second dimension concerns the structure itself of the organization -- and the constraints inherent in the structure. Despite its outward professions of public service, journalism is arduously engaged in private enterprise, and most every news organization holds economic goals as paramount -- regardless of the degree of competition they confront in their markets. The constraints are seen often in the budgetary restrictions on news operations, as well as the more technical requirements of production. The final dimension of Organizational influence is the simplest and most exclusively related to the formal organization: Explicit policy directives from the management. But the degree to which company policy is known, or even exists at all, especially in the realm of ethics, is unclear. Pritchard and Morgan (1989) found that the existence of a company code of ethics had no measurable effect on a journalist's approach to a hypothetical situation. This third dimension supplied the indicator for Organizational influence in the survey. Respondents were asked to what extent they consider whether their company has a written policy on the issue in each scenario.[3]

This study found what researchers have previously found: that the Organizational influence enjoys strength. The Organizational category scored a higher mean than any other category of influences. In terms of influencing the dependent variable, however, the Organizational factors lose some of their initial prowess. In the multiple regression the Organization's originally strong correlations fade to levels of nonsignificant influence; considering the increase in the Small Group coefficient through the regression, the organization's influence could be mediated by the influence of co-workers.

Unlike the Small Group influence, which was associated positively with the respondents' approval of the journalists' actions, the Organizational variables maintain a steady negative association throughout the analysis. Their thoughts of the organization seemed to lead respondents away from approval. The implication here is that while organizations have been thought to put pressure on journalists to abandon their moral caution, at least in these three scenarios the organization was leading the respondents to some degree of moral caution.

COMPETITIVE INFLUENCE

Competitive influence is a close conceptual cousin to the Organizational influence, as it is concerned with the organization's relations with competing news media in its market, as well as the organization's place in the market. It is an external, indirect manifestation of the organization's influence. The literature suggests two distinct dimensions. The first is a function of direct, head-to-head competition in marketplace: Does the competitor's treatment of a subject influence my own treatment? Weaver and Wilhoit (1991) found that Competing Media ranked sixth out of the nine choices for influences on news judgment. The second dimension of the Competitive influence is less direct. It involves a more general notion of the organization's distinct place in its market, and what the members of the organization must do, especially in terms of audience maintenance, to sustain that place in the market. The Competitive influence was represented by this item in the survey: "I think about my company's need to stay ahead of the competition with important exclusive stories."

We can see from the tables that the Competitive influence, while not among the strongest, does deserve a place in the model. Table 1 shows Competitive influence significantly below the overall mean for these variables. But the Competitive influence does seem to have some bearing on the journalist's ultimate decision on the ethical situation. In the multiple regression (Table 2), the Competitive influence blossomed to a coefficient of .21, with an alpha level of .06. And the coefficient, unlike most others, is positive. Whenever this influence does become salient, the salience directs the journalist toward acceptance of the ethically risky action.

OCCUPATIONAL INFLUENCE

This determinant too finds a different home in others' conceptions of influences upon the media. Shoemaker and Reese (1991) included it as one of several Individual influences, but they immediately distinguished it from all other types of Individual factors. The Occupational influence does help shape the communicator's personal ethical orientation, but not in ways that are peculiar to each journalist entering the field. There is instead among journalists a common system of values, attitudes and beliefs, which is transformed, through the process of socialization, into a system of norms to guide behavior. The Shoemaker and Reese model therefore loses an important distinction: The journalist's personal preferences in an ethical decision may in fact run opposite to the norms of the profession.

Many journalists and scholars suggest that there is a body of values or principles we can identify as professional ethics.[4] The notion implies that the journalist's guidance from the occupation, by virtue of education, training, familiarity with the formal codes of ethics, continuing-education seminars and such, can lead her to do the right thing. But we can infer from the sociological literature, and we implicitly suspect from this study's theoretical model, that this is not necessarily the case. Ethically-grounded values may or may not have a presence in each social determinant for any given situation. Some professional values with strong moral roots can be undermined by other professional values -- being the first to break a story involving a prominent personality, for example -- that have less moral basis. Professions and ethics do not necessarily belong in the same phrase. A more appropriate reading would be that occupational norms influence the behavior of journalists, and that these norms carry varying degrees of ethical content and ethical foundation.

But how is it that the professional identity, or occupational norms, actually do influence the decision in an ethical situation? Here three dimensions are identified. The first dimension is the most concrete: the formal "professional" standards of conduct. The codes of national journalistic organizations are rarely if ever enforced (Marzolf, 1991), but they do provide the articulation of the attitudes and general behavior that provide journalists with an occupational identity. Weaver and Wilhoit (1991) found no indication that codes of ethics shaped journalists' general ethical orientation: Newsroom learning and personal background were cited most often as the prominent influences. And in specific situations? Even less is known. Hence the inclusion of this item after each scenario: "I think about whether there's anything on (the issue in the scenario) in our profession's codes of ethics."

The second and third dimensions of Occupational influence are less structured and formal. There is the influences of early journalism education and socialization into the occupation, and the ongoing processes of education and socialization. Often a future journalist undergoes "anticipatory" socialization in journalism courses. And finally, there is the *ongoing* process of socialization. Once a journalist has passed through the formal education and training phases, the learning of norms and development of professional identity does not stop. In addition to the constant teaching and reinforcement engendered by colleagues in the newsroom (the Small Group influence), some journalists are active in professional associations, and through meetings and publications are exposed to issues common to other journalists. The second item for Occupational influence represented a journalist's evolving sense of what comprises the "professionalism" in journalism. Respondents were asked to react to the sentence, "I think about whether this (action under consideration) fits with my view of professionalism."

From the overall results above we see that Occupational factors showed strong frequencies; the combined mean for the Occupational indicators was significantly higher than the aggregate mean for all "influence" variables -- especially the item tapping respondents' notions of professionalism. But for all its strength in frequency, the Occupational category seems not to predict the dependent variable significantly in any one direction. It could be that some conceptions of professionalism led journalists to *reject* the hypothetical outcome (producing a negative correlation), but that other conceptions induced *support* for the hypothetical outcome (producing a positive relationship). For all their frequency, they may have cancelled each other's directional influence.

EXTRAMEDIA INFLUENCE

This diverse category of social determinants, termed "Extramedia" by Shoemaker and Reese, is composed of influences from outside the organizations and structures of the news media. Because the origins of the Extramedia influence are so disparate, it is not surprising that this category of influence, perhaps more so than any other category, can pull a journalist in different ethical directions.

This study has identified four major dimensions of the Extramedia variable. The first is sources of information. This is no doubt the most studied aspect of Extramedia influence on news making in general. Media sociologists have written at length about what Gans (1979) called a "symbiotic" relationship between journalists and their institutional sources (see also Gandy, 1982; Fishman, 1982; Paletz and Entman, 1981). If a reporter disagrees with or angers a powerful source, she runs the risk of being cut off from the flow of information. The fear of that outcome keeps most reporters from challenging their sources, and by extension challenging the organizations they represent. The second dimension is the influence of advertisers. Some advertisers threaten to cancel accounts from time to time to voice displeasure with editorial content, but more often the influence from advertisers is less direct and results in a kind of self-censorship. The third dimension is audience influence, which is usually even less direct than advertising -- but closely related. Audience reactions to media content affect circulation and ratings, which affect advertising revenue and consequent investment in editorial product. Journalists often worry more broadly about the credibility of their craft (Shoemaker & Reese, 1991). The fourth Extramedia diemsnion is the influence of news subjects. The dimension is akin to the sources' influence, but here the person outside the media is not a source, but rather the subject of the story.

The means of Extramedia closed-ended items were the lowest of all seven determinants (Table 1). But that does not mean its presence is unimportant as a social determinant: Extramedia influence was significantly -- and negatively -- associated with the acceptability of the journalists' decision (Table 2). Those who assigned importance to Extramedia factors tended to disapprove of the hypothetical action. The concept was represented in the survey by two indicators: "I wonder what the (subject or source) will do (or think) when they see the story" represents the perception of the personal influence of news sources or news subjects. The other indicator, "I wonder what our readers (viewers) will think when they see this story" represents the more general anticipation of audience reaction. It is hardly surprising that statements of concern over the reactions of sources, subjects or audience would induce a reluctance to proceed with the risky story.

LEGAL INFLUENCE

It is virtually impossible to consider moral obligations without considering legal obligations. Moral reasoning provides the foundation for most court rulings, statutes and other formulations of law. And, as the model in this study suggests, the law exerts some degree of influence on most every formulation of an ethical decision. Legal sociologists often describe two domains for the social influence of the law: formal and informal. They are polar opposites along the same conceptual dimension. At the formal end of the continuum we would expect that journalists who confront a situation with legal implications (1) know there are legal implications, (2) use their knowledge of the law as the primary basis of their decision, and (3) act to comply with the law. With the *informal* aspect of the law, the impact is indirect at best -- and at times nonexistent. A common "informal" approach seems to be reliance on others who have knowledge of the formal law -- either an attorney on retainer or an legal advisers at a statewise press association. The first indicator of Legal influence in the survey was designed to tap the more formal side of this dimension: "I try to recall if there is a law or a recent court decision about (the issue)." The other item was meant to induce legal thoughts less formally: "I wonder if (proceeding with the act) would bring on a lawsuit against myself or my company."

As we might expect, the Legal influence was among the most powerful in this study's matrix of influences -- but not predominantly so. With a mean response of 7.73 for the combination of both Legal items, this determinant was outdone by only one other category in the model -- Organizational (Table 1). As for their predictive power, the strong salience of the law predicts significantly to a disapproval of the contemplated action (Table 2). In fact, Legal influence is the strongest in a block of strong variables, and it is the only one to retain its significance throughout every regression at an alpha level of less than .05.

Conclusions and Implications

The Shoemaker-Reese "hierarchy" model proved a sturdy template for a model of influences on ethical decision-making. In the course of the study, however, it became apparent that because ethical decisions are different from media content, some alterations and specifications were necessary for the new model. But the original metaphor remains apt. There does seem to be a hierarchy of influences upon journalists' decision-making in ethical and legal situations, in that some factors steer the journalist toward a decision more prominently, or influentially, than others. Some factors appear influential at first glance, yet regression analysis shows their influence to be mediated through other factors. As with most social-scientific conclusions, of course, much depends upon contingent conditions. We have seen that the results can depend upon how the influence was measured. The principal measurement in this study was multiple regression, to determine the predictive strengths of several independent variables simultaneously. But a variable's failure to produce a directional association -- either approval or disapproval of the journalistic act -- does not always mean the variable lacks any kind of strength. Its salience, regardless of its directional influence, must not be overlooked.

If we were to order the hierarchy on the basis of all the measures involved in the study, Legal influence emerges as the single most influential factor, but its influence is not overwhelming, relatively or absolutely. Also showing influential strength are the Small Group, Organizational, Occupational, Extramedia and Competitive determinants. Only Individual influence was consistently without salience or influence. Apparently, the individual moral agent is not acting on the basis of her own values and moral logic, isolated somehow from external forces. Time and again other, more external forces, weighed more heavily upon the decision to embrace or reject a controversial action.

The utter inability to declare one " most powerful" determinant is perhaps the best result we could have hoped for at the outset of the study. There is no single source of ethical direction, and this conclusion has obvious implications for media policy.

IMPLICATIONS FOR MEDIA POLICYMAKERS

Ethics should matter to journalists, and it should matter to media managers. Journalists' credibility, their fitful progress toward professionalism and perhaps even their legal rights and freedoms depend to a large extent on the manner in which they treat the people they cover. But in pragmatic, policymaking terms, who are the responsible agents for this new level of awareness? There are several possibilities.

This study has found that Small Group, Organizational, Occupational, Extramedia and Legal determinants are important to journalists' decision-making. The salience is present already; what is needed is an infusion of higher ethical awareness at one or more of these levels of influence. Some opportunities are more feasible than others. At the Organizational level, for example, companies can move to create, as Beam (1990) and Kohlberg (1976) have both suggested, an environment that is conducive to professionalism -- even to moral reasoning. This can be done structurally, by minimizing the numbers of situations in which organizational demands and occupational norms conflict, or the situations in which personal moral standards are overridden by morally vacant organizational demands. But as the theoretical model for the study has insisted, raising the salience of a particular determinant alone does not guarantee morally correct behavior. The profile must be raised in ways that encourage sensitivity to the moral dimensions of a situation. One suggestion would be regular but informal discussions among news workers about the day's (or week's or month's) prickliest ethical situations.

Because the Small Group influence was also one of the more powerful, its ethical content can be changed to some extent also by managers of an organization. If journalists do indeed heed the examples and thoughts of their co-workers and immediate supervisors, media managers can pay attention to what Kohlberg would call the moral maturity of the people they hire and promote. More effective than a company policy of "do's and don't's" would be the influence of key people in the newsroom who are ethically "mature."

The Occupational influence is not as easily dealt with at the organizational or interpersonal level. A large part of one's Occupational orientation, this study and others suggest, occurs during college journalism training and the first years on the job. Ethics could become a more important part of journalism education than it is now, so that the professional values with which young journalists identify can be more firmly grounded in ethics. This study affirmed the weakness of the influence of national professional codes of conduct, but there may be role for national professional organizations nonetheless. Publications and local chapter activities of such groups as the Society of Professional Journalists could raise the profile of ethical situations and moral reasoning, conveying the message that part of behaving "like a professional," is to become adept at moral reasoning.

To the social scientist, ethics may seem forever in the domain of the normative, prescriptive scholars who are more concerned with what ought to be than with the scientist's pursuit of what seems to be. But ethics ought to be observed, and observed as a part of the larger network of attitudes and behaviors of journalists that have always attracted media sociologists' attention. This attempt at the integration of the research literature of media ethics and media sociology is offered as an initial step toward a more systematic observation and explanation of journalism ethics and law. The next, logical steps would include deeper examination of the values that inform these social determinants, especially to look for connection between those values and ethical principles. There will probably never be a seamless merging of these disparate disciplines, but to the extent that each research tradition edges closer to the other, each is strengthened. The ethicist who understands how an ethical decision is made in the newsroom and what actual effect it has upon an audience can be more precise and less speculative in her moral evaluation. And the social scientist who can assess processes and effects in the context of a system of values and principles can add a new dimension of social meaning to her empirical findings. The impossibility of marriage of these two paradigms should not preclude the opportunity for dialogue.

Notes

1. Originally 120 journalists for the sample were selected, by use of a table of random numbers. After some substitutions a total of 118 were interviewed; the overall response rate was 93.3 percent. The sampling frame included not only veteran "hard news" reporters and editors but also entry-level journalists and those specializing in business, sports, lifestyles and features -- even a handful of television meteorologists. Of the 118 journalists in the final sample, 29 (24.6 percent) were classified as either middle- or top-level newsroom managers.

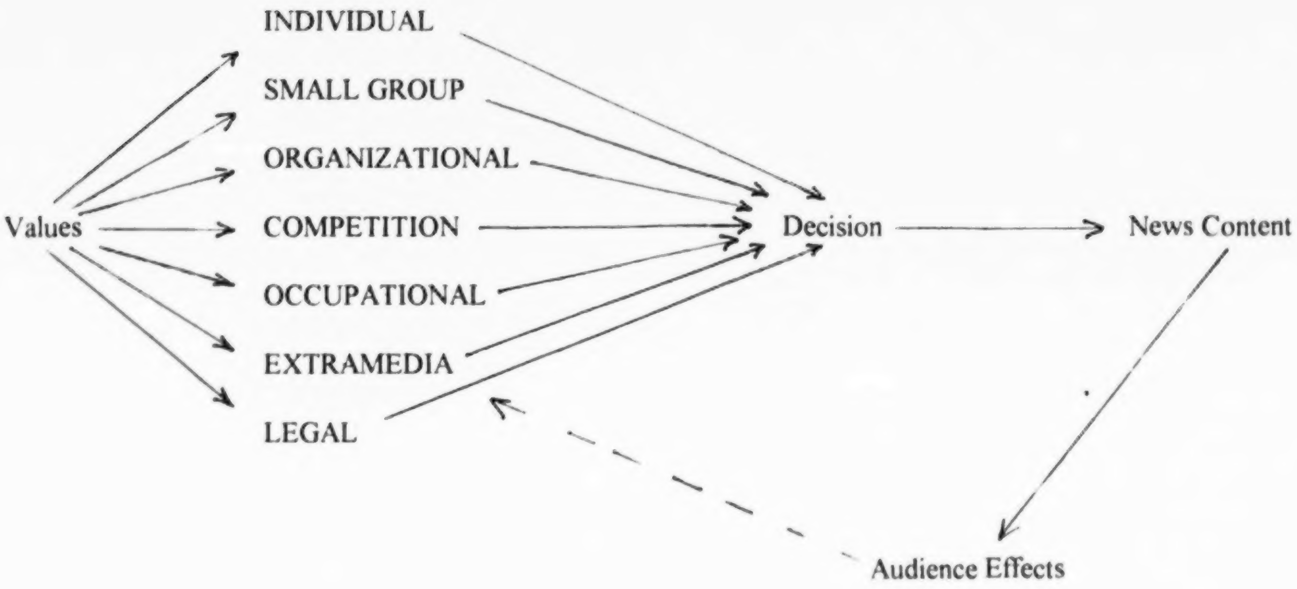
2. Throughout the study three level of statistical significance are noted, rather than the customary two levels. Significance at probability level of less than .01, less than .05 and less than .10 are noted. The third, unusual, level is reported in order to enable a discussion of results whose significance narrowly misses the standard .05 level. When regressions are computed with a small sample size and a large number of independent variables, statistical significance at less than .05 is more difficult to achieve than with a larger sample and fewer variables. Thus the results at the "looser" level of significance will be noted, but they are discussed separately from results at levels of less than .05, and they will not be accorded the same confidence.

3. There is only one survey item representing each of the Organizational and Competitive influences because the two originally had been combined as one variable concept ("Organizational"), with one item representing thoughts about company policy and the other representing thoughts about the company's competitors. However, the eventual inter-item correlation between the two was so miserably weak that they could not be combined into an index. They were thus separated into two distinct independent variables, Organizational and Competitive, each with its own place in the overall hierarchy.

4. The term "occupational" is used here interchangeably with "professional." The author prefers "occupational," as there is considerable, ongoing debate over whether journalism is in any sense a profession. Because so many respondents used the term "professional" themselves, it became an accepted element of the study's lexicon.

Figure 1

Ethics and the Social Determinants of Newsmaking



Values
INDIVIDUAL
SMALL GROUP
ORGANIZATIONAL
COMPETITION
OCCUPATIONAL
EXTRAMEDIA
LEGAL
Decision
News Content
Audience Effects

Table 1

Means of the Measures of Social Determinants

	Nursing Home	Juvenile's Name	Candidate	Overall
Individual	**6.97 (2.43)**	**6.63* (2.59)**	**6.96 (2.38)**	**6.87 (2.17)**
Personal Values	7.01 (2.87)	6.69 (2.80)	6.91 (2.68)	6.88 (2.44)
Own Logic	6.92 (2.68)	6.56* (2.69)	6.95 (2.49)	6.82 (2.31)
Small Group	**7.00 (2.24)**	**7.38 (2.10)**	**7.47** (1.95)**	**7.27 (1.81)**
Observe others	6.01** (2.75)	6.47* (2.77)	6.47 (2.59)	6.31* (2.35)
Talk to others	7.99** (2.70)	8.31** (2.40)	8.47** (1.93)	8.26** (2.04)
Organizational	**8.10** (2.77)**	**9.15** (1.68)**	**7.63** (2.56)**	**8.32** (1.92)**
Competition	**6.11** (2.67)**	**5.53** (2.65)**	**6.17** (2.71)**	**5.97** (2.35)**
Occupational	**7.27 (2.11)**	**7.46 (2.07)**	**7.41** (1.80)**	**7.37* (1.69)**
'Professionalism'	7.86** (2.59)	7.73* (2.26)	8.07** (1.95)	7.90** (1.88)
Code of Ethics	6.64 (2.61)	7.19 (2.68)	6.77 (2.38)	6.87 (2.14)
Extramedia	**5.09** (2.47)**	**5.90** (2.40)**	**5.58** (2.27)**	**5.53** (1.95)**
Audience	5.44** (2.87)	5.43** (2.71)	5.98** (2.67)	5.61** (2.32)
Subjects	4.70** (3.21)	6.34* (2.76)	5.17** (2.62)	5.42** (2.21)
Legal	**7.83** (2.69)**	**8.16** (1.67)**	**7.21 (2.23)**	**7.73** (1.72)**
The Law	8.28** (2.44)	9.26** (1.35)	7.68** (2.53)	8.40** (1.65)
Threat of suit	7.38 (2.69)	7.07 (2.76)	6.73 (2.93)	7.07 (2.42)
Column mean	**6.91**	**7.17**	**6.92**	**7.01**

n = 118

Notes:

1) Values expressed are the means (and standard deviations) of the responses (on a scale from 1 to 10) to closed-ended items.

2) The indented phrases represent the individual items that comprise the boldfaced, composite variables immediately above them..

3) Asterisks denote significant difference, either higher or lower, from the mean of the responses for that column, as determined by a two-tailed t-test (* p<.05, ** p<.01).

Table 2

Predicting Acceptability of Journalists' Actions in Ethical/Legal Situations

Multiple Regression

	Simple r	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Incr. R^2
Demographics					.04
Gender (male)	.00	.04	.04	-.02	
Age	-.16	-.15	-.04	-.11	
Education	.12	.13	.13	.04	
Other Key Characteristics					.03
Ever Threatened with a Lawsuit	.11		.19	.11	
Yrs./ Journalism	-.13		-.16	-.12	
Social Determinants					.15**
Individual	-.04			.00	
Small Group	-.07			.21^	
Competition	.05			.20^	
Organizational	-.21*			-.06	
Occupational	-.23*			-.18	
Extramedia	-.21*			-.22^	
Legal	-.26**			-.26*	
Equation F-ratio					2.40 (.009)

n = 118, ^p<.10, *p<.05, **p<.01

Notes:

1) Dependent variable is the acceptability of journalists' actions, summed across all three scenarios.

2) "Other Key Characteristics" are objective variables whose strong bivariate associations had suggested possible predictive power in a regression equation.

3) In Step 3, the coefficients of Small Group, Competition and Extramedia achieved alpha levels of significance, respectively, of .065, .062, and .053.

4) "Equation F-ratio" refers to the ANOVA test as to whether the blocks of variables entered in the equation explained a significant amount of the variance in the dependent variable.

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